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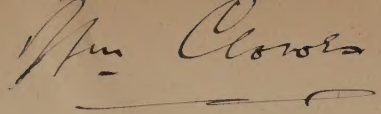

ENGLISH WHIST

ENGLISH WHIST

AND

ENGLISH WHIST PLAYERS

BY

WILLIAM PRIDEAUX COURTNEY

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To

THE MEMBERS OF THE REFORM CLUB

WHO FREQUENT ITS CARD-ROOM

THESE PAGES ARE DEDICATED, WITH GRATEFUL RECOLLECTIONS

OF MANY HAPPY HOURS PASSED IN THEIR COMPANY.

'Game that I love, for it, my friends, is thine.'

PREFACE.

Some portion of the contents of these pages appeared in two papers contributed by me to *Temple Bar*, in April and May, 1893. They contained but a small part of the information in my possession, and the favour bestowed upon them led me to give a ready acquiescence to the suggestion of Mr. George Bentley that a volume on whist and its devotees might be attended with an equal measure of success.

Any fresh anecdotes on the history of the game, or any details of the lives of those who have been conspicuous in its pursuit, will be gratefully received.

W. P. COURTNEY.

Reform Club Chambers,
Pall Mall, S.W.
September, 1894.

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ENGLISH WHIST

CHAPTER I.

THE BIRTH AND PROGRESS OF WHIST.

The game of whist is substantially the product of English soil, and its gradual development during more than two centuries, until it has all but arrived at maturity, is mainly due to British talent. From England it was carried about a hundred and sixty years ago into the centres of Parisian life, and the diplomatists and financiers from other countries who resorted to that capital became subject to its influence, and introduced it into the cities of their own lands. Its sway as the chief game at cards quickly reached all over Europe, even to the steppes of Russia, and held captive all classes in social life. The colonists who emigrated to America and Australia carried the game into even more remote districts; and during the last quarter of a century many varieties of play have been brought back to England from the thriving towns in the north-west provinces of

the United States. It has now established its supremacy in every land inhabited by European nations or their descendants, and it may even be endowed with sufficient vitality for the conquest of future ages.

Whist may be traced in a crude form in the old national games of trump and English ruff and honours. Some expressions in the first of them were used by Bishop Latimer, a keen observer of the life passing around him, to bring home to the students in Cambridge (before whom he preached in St. Edward's Church, on December 19, 1529, his two famous sermons 'On the Card') the doctrine of salvation through 'Christ's cards.' The game at which they were to play was to be the triumph, from which the modern word 'trump' has been gradually perverted, and it was to be so applied as 'to fetch home unto him all the other cards, whatsoever suit they be of.' From this point the impassioned preacher implored each member of his congregation to 'turn up your trump, your heart (hearts is trumps, as I said before), and cast your trump, your heart, on this card.'

Incidental allusions to the same amusements are found in English literature throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth and her successor. At some period in the seventeenth century the four leading cards in trumps gained for themselves the distinctive title of 'honours'; and in the 'Compleat Gamester,' which first appeared in 1674, and was frequently reprinted,

chapter eleven is devoted to 'English Ruff and Honours and Whist.' This compilation was issued anonymously, but some generations later the parentage was assigned to Charles Cotton, translator and poet, as well as a country gentleman. His tastes were for pleasures of every kind, both indoor and outdoor, and he possessed considerable knowledge of classical literature and of the languages of France and Italy, in both of which countries he seems to have travelled in early life. Part of the illustration which is prefixed, representing some ladies and gentlemen playing at cards, and four of the lines, are familiar to thousands of readers from their being used as the frontispiece to the volume of Cavendish on 'The Laws and Principles of Whist.' Cotton, with much exaggeration, says that 'Ruff and Honours (alias *Slamm*) and Whist are games so commonly known in England in all parts thereof, that every child almost of eight years old hath a competent knowledge in that recreation.'

His description of these amusements is worthy of quotation. Of the former he says:

'At Ruff and Honours, by some called *Slamm*, you have in the Pack all the deuces, and the reason is, because four playing have dealt twelve apiece, there are four left for the Stock, the uppermost whereof is turn'd up, and that is trumps, he that hath the ace of that ruffs; that is, he takes in those four Cards and lays out four others in their lieu; the four Honours are the Ace, King, Queen and Knave;

he that hath three honours in his own hand, his partner not having the fourth, sets up eight by cards, that is two tricks; if he hath all four, then sixteen, that is four tricks; it is all one if two partners make them three or four between them, as if one had them. If the honours are equally divided among the Gamesters of each side, then they say Honours are split. If either side are at eight groats, he hath the benefit of calling Can-ye; if he hath two honours in his hand, and if the other answers one, the game is up, which is nine in all, but if he hath more than two he shows them, and then it is one and the same thing; but if he forgets to call after playing a trick, he loseth the advantage of Can-ye for that deal.

'All cards are of value as they are superiour one to another, as a Ten wins a Nine, if not Trumps, so a Queen a Knave in like manner; but the least Trump will win the highest card of any other card; where note the Ace is the highest.'

His definition of the second game is:

'Whist is a game not much differing from this, only they put out the Deuces and take in no stock, and is called Whist from the silence that is to be observed in the play; they deal as before, playing four, two of a side . . . to each twelve apiece, and the trump is the bottom card. The manner of crafty playing, the number of the game Nine, honours and dignity of other cards, are all alike, and he that wins most tricks is most forward to win the set.'

* By far the larger portion of the chapter on these games consisted of an admonition on the foul play to which the novices might be exposed by the card-sharpers in London life, and Cotton set out at length the tricks of the professed cheat. He delivers himself of the warning, 'He that can by craft overlook his adversaries' game, hath a great advantage,' and points out that by winking or by moving the fingers the knowledge of the honours in his possession can be communicated from a player to his partner. Against 'reneging or renouncing, that is not following suit when you have it in your hand,' he declaims with marked vehemence. It is 'very fowl play, and he that doth it ought to forfeit one.'

The earliest mention of the game of 'whisk' is in the 'Motto' of John Taylor, the water-poet, which came out in 1621. The first spelling of 'whist' occurs in the second and spurious part of 'Hudibras,' which is dated in 1663. For several generations after the later date the words were used indifferently, but the earlier appellation has now become obsolete, although it was used in print so late as 1791. Its disuse may have been due to the fact that some writers, including Dr. Johnson, associated it with vulgarity.

The meaning of both these terms has been much disputed by antiquaries and philologers. Daines Barrington, in an article which he contributed in 1786 to the 'Archæologia,' vol. viii., designates the

game throughout the text of his treatise by the word 'whisk,' although he allowed in a footnote that the word was 'most commonly written whist.' This provoked some criticism from the Rev. Samuel Denne, a Kentish antiquary, who contributed innumerable papers to the *Gentleman's Magazine* under the curious disguise of 'W. & D.' His letter (1788, Part I., p. 190) points out that 'whisk is manifestly far better adapted to hazard, as well as unlimited loo and many other games of cards, in which the largest stake can be more expeditiously swept or swabbered off the table than it can at whist,' remarks which seem to imply a belief in his mind that the word was used in the sense attached to the modern word 'to whisk.' Chatto threw out the suggestion that the term 'whisk' was 'derived by substitution from ruff, both of them signifying a piece of lawn used as an ornament to the dress'; but although the game now universally known as whist received many names in turn, this explanation will hardly obtain universal assent. It is repudiated by Cavendish, who in his turn repeats the opinion of 'the best modern etymologists,' that both words 'being like whisper, whistle, wheeze, hush and hist, words of imitative origin, it makes no difference which form is first found.'

A strong catena of authorities couples the name of 'whist' with the necessity for silence, which is a requisite to success in its practice. It was so with Cotton in 1674, and in the following year the author

of a tract on 'Coffee-houses Vindicated' refers to an opposition pamphlet-monger as wishing to 'make company sit as mute in a coffee-house as a Quaker at a silent meeting or himself when . . . playing a game at whist.' Charles Lucas, in his work on gamesters (1714), stigmatizes one Patrick Hurley as a man who, 'when he hath play'd at Whist, *a game so called from the silence that is to be observed at it*, hath us'd sinister practices.' Denne, in the letter just quoted, speaks of it as 'a game that requires deliberation and silence, which is a word synonymous with *whist*,' an expression which closely follows that of Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary. Southey devotes the fifty-ninth chapter (vol. iii., pp. 75-82) of 'Letters from England by don Manuel Alvarez Espriella, translated from the Spanish,' to the subject of cards. The game of whist 'suits the taciturnity and thoughtfulness of the national character; indeed, its name is derived from *whish*, a word, or rather sound, which they make when they would enjoin silence'; but to this is added a note, as by the translator, 'It seems by this etymology, as if some person had been fooling the author's curiosity.' Nares in his Glossary, and Skeat in his Etymological Dictionary, both assert that the game is called 'whist' from the silence requisite for its due performance, and such is the view adopted by all the modern lexicographers.

About 1680 the game of whist was complicated by the importance assigned to four privileged cards—

the ace of hearts, knave of clubs, ace and deuce of trumps—which were incidentally used for betting purposes, and were technically known as 'swabbers.' The word was akin to the familiar verbs 'sweep' and 'swab,' and the cards are believed by Daines Barrington to have been so called because the players who held them 'were entitled to take up a share of the stake independent of the general event of the game.' They swept the board—to use the phrase still current in the language—just as seamen when they wash the decks are technically, in nautical language, said to 'swab' them. Fortunately, the use of these cards soon dropped out of common practice, and thus an additional and disproportionate element of chance was eliminated from the game.

Daines Barrington asserted, and most of the later writers on the subject have adopted his view, that whist in its primal stages was chiefly confined to the servants' hall. Barrington, whose name is familiar to many readers from the curious mention of him in Charles Lamb's essay on the 'Old Benchers of the Inner Temple,' and from the letters addressed to him by Gilbert White and published in the 'Natural History of Selborne,' laid down the law in some instances with undue emphasis, and with not a little prejudice, and this assertion is, perhaps, in excess of the truth. There is abundant evidence that its popularity was almost equally divided between the higher and lower circles in life. Field-

ing, in his history of 'Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great,' depicts Count la Ruse as relieving the dulness of confinement in a spunging-house by playing at 'whisk and swabbers, the game then in the chief vogue.' Swift tells a story, narrated on another page, of Tenison's ignorance of 'whisk and swabbers.'

But it is not infrequently found as an incident in the social life of the upper classes. An interesting glimpse of fashionable life in the summer of 1686 is revealed to us in the Rutland Manuscripts (Hist. MSS. Comm., 12 Rep., App., Pt. V., p. 108). Bridget Noel, writing to her sister, then the Countess of Rutland, describes a visit paid to Exton by 'My lady Exeter and her Lord, and Lady Kathern Noels and Lady Noel.' On entering the drawing-room she found in it three tables spread for cards, 'and all the tables fil'd with gamesters. My lady Exeter and sister Noel and Lord Campden was a playing at gleek, and Lord Exeter and my sister Gainsbor and Sister Pen and lord Digby was at Whisk with Swabers, and Lady Digby and Lady Kathern Noels at crebedg.' The prolongation of the play of these noble lords and ladies was worthy of a sitting in a club in St. James's Street a century later. They all supped at Exton, and stayed until five o'clock, when the party broke up. 'To-morrow is Sunday,' writes the fair Bridget, 'and I intend to go to church, so that I have not mutch time to send you word of any fashens.'

The rival systems had each its devoted admirers. They struggled for supremacy, and, fortunately for mankind, whist with swabbers lost the contest. A curious reference to the other variety of play—viz., whist with honours—is given in the entertaining memoirs of Lord Ailesbury, which have just been printed for the gratification of the select few who form the members of the Roxburghe Club. This Jacobite peer notes in his rambling style that the Prince and Princess of Denmark in the autumn, winter, and spring of 1692-93 took Berkeley House in Piccadilly, which then stood on the present site of Devonshire House. They were now out of favour with William III., and their levées were not attended by the Court parasites. Ailesbury, who was an honest old boy, without a spark of fear in his composition, did not keep aloof from his old friends, and the Duke of Shrewsbury, then against the Court, went thither constantly. Some few generous-spirited ladies, but very few in number, also waited on them; 'but to play there was only us two, and the game was whist with honours, in vogue at that time.'

A lengthy table specifying Swift's gains and losses at cards from 1702 to 1710 is printed by John Forster in his memoir of the Dean. The games which he first played were ombre and picquet; they are succeeded by basset, and in November, 1709, there is a single entry that he had won 2s. 4d. at 'ombr. and whish' from Raymond and Morgan. The

Dean was not a mighty enthusiast for cards, but he could display undying hatred. In his journal to Stella, under date of March 2, 1712-13, he sets down in cold blood, and without the least expression of contrition, an act of rudeness on his part towards Lady Godolphin, and a threat of subsequent revenge to be inflicted on her. He went to the house of Lady Clarges, and 'found four of them at whist. Lady Godolphin was one. I sat by her and talked of her cards, etc.; but she would not give one look, nor say a word to me. She refused some time ago to be acquainted with me. You know she is Lord Marlborough's eldest daughter. She is a fool for her pains, and I'll pull her down.'

Whist-parties both for belles and beaux must have come into great repute in London at this period in our national life. Additional corroboration of this is found in the account of the Everlasting Club, printed in the *Spectator*, No. 72. It was fabled to consist of one hundred members, 'who divided the day between them so that the meetings of the club should never end.' The club was remarkable for a great consumption of cards, and among the wondrous topics of conversation in which the century of members delighted to dwell were the 'games at whisk, which have been miraculously recovered by members of the society when in all human probability the case was desperate.'

In Farquhar's play of 'The Beaux' Stratagem,' produced at Drury Lane in 1707, a town lady, Mrs.

Sullen, doomed for a time at all events to life in the country, inveighs with all the energy of her being against country pleasures. 'Dost think,' she cries out to her sister-in-law, 'that my parents, wisely foreseeing my future happiness . . . had early instructed me in the rural accomplishments of drinking fat ale, playing at whisk, and smoaking tobacco with my husband?' Of a similar character are the expressions employed by Pope in the epistle which he first of all addressed to Teresa Blount, and subsequently to her sister, Martha Blount, and by Mrs. Delany in her autobiography. The latter was a Granville by birth, daughter of Bernard Granville, and great-grand-daughter of Sir Bevil Granville, who died 'fighting for his King and country' on Lansdown Hill, near Bath. Her father was a man of small means, and the loss of Court favour on the death of Queen Anne compelled him, when his daughter was but fifteen, to retire to a quaint old manor-house at Buckland, a village about halfway between Winchcombe in Gloucestershire and Evesham in Worcestershire, and to husband his scanty resources. In so retired a retreat little amusement could be provided for the residents. The poor girl was called upon every evening 'to make up a party at whist with my father and mother and the minister of the parish.'

The succession of the numerous games of cards which prevailed in England during the first half of the last century is succinctly chronicled by Lady

Mary Wortley Montagu in a letter written to the Countess of Bute in May, 1749. 'Your new-fashioned game of brag,' writes this sprightly dame, 'was the genteel amusement when I was a girl; crimp succeeded to that, and basset and hazard employed the town when I left it to go to Constantinople. On my return I found them all at commerce, which gave place to quadrille, and that to whist; but the rage of play has been ever the same, and ever will be so among the idle of both sexes.'

During this period considerable changes—all, strange to say, for the better—were introduced into the game of whist, and, according to Daines Barrington, who gave as his authority an anonymous player who was eighty-six years of age in 1786, the world was indebted for these improvements to a 'set of gentlemen who frequented the Crown coffee-house in Bedford Row,' and studied the niceties of the game with close attention. The name of one alone of these benefactors to society is revealed to us, and it should ever be held in honour among the devotees of the whist-table. It was that of Sir Jacob de Bouverie, who was ennobled as Viscount Folkestone in 1747, and was the ancestor of the present Earl of Radnor. By this time the deuces had been restored to the pack, so that the whole fifty-two cards were brought into play, the odd trick had been established as a permanent feature of the game, and the points had been raised from

nine to ten. By this simple restoration of the four lowest cards, and the alteration in the numbers of the tricks and points which their presence necessitated, the game was placed in a condition for the introduction of more scientific treatment. The frequenters of the Crown coffee-house saw their opportunity, and took immediate advantage of it. They imposed upon themselves the following rules:

'To play from the strongest suit, to study your partner's hand as much as your own, never to force your partner unnecessarily, and to attend to the score.'

On these rules the whole modern system of whist has been based.

The game at once made long strides in public favour, and before long ejected from the field most of its competitors. It immediately asserted its domination over the gay crowds that flocked to Bath for health or for amusement. In September, 1734, Pulteney, the most effective leader in his Majesty's Opposition at that date, wrote to the Hon. George Berkeley, who was about to visit Bath to recreate himself by a course of its waters, and wished him 'a great deal of health, a great deal of diversion, good luck at whist, and that Mr. Humphreys [who, when he lost, forgot to pay] may pay you your money.' About three years later—November 14, 1737—the artful old Lord Chesterfield sent to Lady Suffolk a description of the life of one of Bath's fashionable votaries. Mr. Herbert, whose full name was the

Hon. Robert Sawyer Herbert, and he was the second son of the eighth Earl of Pembroke, 'lies in bed till between ten and eleven, where he eats two breakfasts of strong broth; then rides till one or two; after which he dines commonly pretty plentifully with me, and concludes the evening at billiards and whist.' A little later (April 4, 1741) Lady Suffolk herself wrote to George Berkeley, her second husband, that at nine o'clock at night, when she sealed her missive, she should be 'perfectly well, and engaged at whist, though perhaps thinking of you.'

In this same year of 1741 the subjection to the game of every class in life was so marked that one titled lady, the Countess of Hertford, penned the words, 'The girls and boys sit down as gravely to whist-tables as fellows of colleges used to do formerly.' Horace Walpole did not much love the game, and he dropped to his distant correspondent at Florence a few splenetic phrases over its prevalence. Its adoption 'has spread an universal opium over the whole nation. It makes courtiers and patriots sit down to the same pack of cards' (December 9, 1742). This result, which Horace regarded with such a dolorous eye, will not at this date disturb the equanimity of the ordinary reader. Nor will he be much affected by a second letter to Sir Horace Mann, despatched in the following spring, April 4, 1743, which alludes to the volume of Hoyle, and his efforts to secure publicity and protection for it.

Whist, he writes, 'seems to have stretched its leaden wand over me. . . . I am trying to set up the noble game of bilboquet'—the plaything usually known as cup and ball—'against it, and composing a grammar in opposition to Mr. Hoyle's. You will some day or other see an advertisement in the papers to tell you where it may be bought, and that ladies may be waited upon by the author at their houses to receive any further directions.'

An advertisement to a pirated edition of Hoyle's treatise on whist, which was printed at Dublin in 1743, put before the public as the chief centres of the game in London the chocolate houses known as White's and George's, and the coffee-houses of Slaughter's and the Crown. These houses touched every district west of the city. White's was situate in St. James's Street. George's stood just outside Temple Bar, and was frequented by such varied characters as the thrifty Sir James Lowther and the improvident poet Shenstone. Slaughter's coffee-house was at the upper end of the west side of St. Martin's Lane, close to Newport Street, and it was in its rooms that the celebrated mathematician, Abraham de Moivre, might be found at the close of his days. He eked out a miserable existence by giving answers to the questions on the doctrine of chances which arose among those contending at picquet or whist, and he found at Slaughter's the keenest inquiries on such probabilities. The Crown was the famous establishment

in Bedford Row at which whist attained to comparative perfection.

When the insurrection of the Young Pretender was crushed out, the political leaders of the day betook themselves to their amusements again with as little concern as if they had not been within measurable distance of his retribution. Bath took the leading place for attraction, and the Duke of Bedford repaired to it for his health's sake in May, 1746. 'I am grown'—such is his deprecatory missive to the Duchess—'a great gamester at whist, and play to win or lose £20 or £30 a day; hitherto a winner. When I came here I did not design to play at all, but without it there is no possibility of knowing how to employ one's time.'

The rooms at this king of watering-places are described for the benefit of posterity by a host of witnesses. Another of the great political celebrities of the century, the painstaking and penny-wise George Grenville, sought at its springs for an improvement in his health in April, 1748. Once, and once only, was his stern countenance seen within its rooms, and they 'were as full as they could hold; but I saw nobody,' he writes to Lady Suffolk, 'whose face I had ever beheld before, except Mr. and Mrs. Finch, Lady Winchelsea, and Mr. Damer, who were at whist.' The same complaint of the abundance of the 'masses' at Bath was made by a titled leader of fashion, Lady Vere, in October, 1751. The public rooms were thronged with

visitors, but not by the lords and ladies who formed the circle of her aristocratic acquaintance. 'Such multitudes as were there, and really not above one in a hundred that we knew. I got nobody to play with me; and Lady Albemarle, Lady Betty [Germaine], and my Lord [Vere] played at half-crown whist with a lady they did not know, who, seeing their distress, offered her service' ('Suffolk Letters,' vol. ii.).

Goldsmith, when at Leyden, was faithfully noting in his memory the characteristics of the 'patient sons' of Holland, and the scenery of the little amphibious world in which he was stationed. These mental pictures have been transmitted to posterity in the harmonious lines of 'The Traveller.' A terser description of the habits of the natives of three countries as they dawdled through its slow canals in the *Trekschuiten*, then drawn by horses, was despatched by him to his uncle, the Rev. Thomas Contarine, in 1753. In these dilatory conveyances the passengers amused themselves in their distinctive ways. 'Here the Dutch slumber, the French chatter, and the English play at cards.' In such amusements our countrymen and countrywomen, whether at home or abroad, passed the long hours. At Bath in 1760, so runs the fable, subscription-lists were opened for daily prayers at the abbey, and for further facilities for gaming in the pump-rooms. The sinners had it all their own way. It was an easy triumph, as twelve only polled for

more prayers, and sixty-seven signed their names to an appeal for additional opportunities of gambling.

The rage for cards is set out in almost every page of the journals of that whimsical creature but warm-hearted friend, Lady Mary Coke. Card-parties were the mania of the day, and it mattered little to the fashionable denizens of Mayfair whether they were held on weekdays or on Sundays. Before the winter of 1766-67 her most frequent diversion consisted of a game at quadrille with her mother, but on Sunday, November 9, 1766, she played at 'whisk' at the house of Lady Harrington, but she only 'play'd one ruber.' On the following Sunday the course of fashion took her to the house of the French Ambassadress, where 'she play'd two rubers at whisk,' and then left for the abode of another august dame in high life, at which she won ten guineas at loo. Then home, 'eat my rosted apples, read a little in the Bible, and went to bed.' Next year sped away in the same fashion. Early in the month of January Lady Mary played 'at whist, and lost six guineas'; and before its close she paid a visit to the rooms of the Princess Amelia, then one of her stanch friends, and played at 'whisk' with the Princess, Lord Coventry, and Lord Ashburnham. They all 'laugh'd extremely,' though poor Lady Mary, usually an unlucky performer, 'play'd with very ill luck, and lost eleven guineas.' In the following April the Princess was set down 'to whisk' at Lady Temple's, and throughout that year, as

well as its successors, the brilliant company in which Lady Mary Coke moved spent part of their Sunday evenings in whist or some other congenial diversion.

The affability of the Princess Amelia is duly lauded by her faithful friend, Lady Mary Coke. She was mistress of herself, even with a bad partner. On one occasion (January 12, 1768) 'the new lady of the Bed-chamber, Lady Anne Howard,' made a fault at the table. 'She will in a little time do very well,' was the prophecy, 'but at present she wants a little instruction, which was conveyed to her by the Princess in the most indulgent manner.'

By this time the desire of imitating the English in their amusements had seized on the gay habitués of Paris, and held them in its thralls. The love of whist was the prevailing passion in French houses. In Parisian salons it was impossible to meet with any other amusement, and for a time, at all events, it banished even the charm of conversation. Horace Walpole, who loved talk and hated cards, noted this mania in a letter which he wrote from Paris to Lady Suffolk on October 16, 1765, but at the same time he announced to her his fixed determination 'never to learn again. I sit by and yawn, which, however, is better than sitting at it to yawn.' He had in the previous month imparted to the same dear old lady that he had found 'an excellent preservative against sitting up late, which is by not playing at whist. They constantly tap a rubber before supper, get up in the middle of a game, finish it

after a meal of three courses and a dessert; add another rubber to it; then take their knotting-bags, draw together into a little circle, and start some topic of literature or irreligion, and that till it is time to go to bed.' A little later he expressed a wish for 'less whist and somewhat more cleanliness,' and early in December he had the supreme satisfaction of informing Lady Suffolk that he was firmly established 'in two or three societies, where I sup every night, though I have still resisted whist.'

Two years later the lord of Strawberry Hill was again among his friends at Paris, and communicating to his correspondents, this time chiefly to Sir Horace Mann, his ancient sarcasms on his hosts. He sent to Florence the announcement that he had found the game of whist prevalent in Paris at his last visit, when he told its leaders of society in their salons that 'they were very good to imitate us in anything, but that they had adopted the two dullest things we have—whist and Richardson's novels.'

Another member of the governing classes of England, the Earl of Carlisle, who for a time wasted his resources and his energies in prolonged sittings at the gaming-table, paid a visit to the same gay city during the Christmas of 1768. When abroad he did not banish from his mind all thoughts of his friends in London, and to George Selwyn he forwarded a letter which must have been received with rapture. He imparted to Selwyn the agreeable news that the inmates of the Duc de Choiseul's

mansion often asked after him and Lord March, and then communicated the pleasing reason for their inquiries. 'You need not be afraid,' writes this playful peer to the wit, 'of being forgot while whist is played in that house, for at every egregious blunder I am sure to hear your name. You are the constant simile.' The Duc de Choiseul, who was then the virtual ruler of the country, had his trials in life, and they sometimes extended to his game at whist. All his resources were taxed to maintain his ground against the influence of the royal mistress, Madame du Barry, and as he succeeded for a time in keeping his position in spite of her persistent efforts to oust him from power, she revenged herself, and showed the innate vulgarity of her disposition by some acts of rudeness towards him. They were both of them seated at the whist-table in company with the King, Louis XV., when the mistress and the Minister were leagued in temporary partnership. Madame was 'so well bred as . . . to make faces' at the Duke, but 'Solomon thought this a little too strong, and has reprimanded his beloved' (Walpole to Mann, November 30, 1769).

About 1767 Franklin went to Paris, and was admitted to the select salons of his day. He noted his impressions of the city's gay life in his diary, and his conclusion was that 'quadrille was out of fashion, and English whist all the mode at Paris and in the Court.'

From this date the noble science never lost its

hold on the affections of the Parisians. Whist was played in every centre of city life right up to the Revolution by the reactionary noblemen that flocked round the Comte d'Artois and in the salons of the ladies who then inspired the leaders of the Opposition with patriotic ardour. Gouverneur Morris remained within the walls of Paris throughout 1791, and was a popular figure in Republican society. He records in his diary (February 24, 1791) a visit which he paid to Madame de Flahaut. She was ill in bed, and he played 'sixpenny whist with her.' Less than a month later the same lady was taken ill while driving with Mademoiselle Duplessis and Morris. They at once 'returned to the Louvre, put her to bed, and played whist by her bedside' ('Diary and Letters,' i. 385, 393).

It soon acquired a mastery over the affections of French society in its chief cities. Joseph Jekyll, the wit, who gained a great reputation in the jests and frolics of life, but lost it in the more serious affairs of the law and politics, spent several months in France in 1775 and 1776. He passed most of his time in Blois, where he visited all the families of fashion. The habits of daily life, after the morning studies and exercises had been finished, are briefly described. It was their custom to dine at one o'clock, to join the *monde*, 'as it is phrased,' between four and five, and to play at whist from six to seven or eight. Gaming was then the vice of the country. Of a young Englishman who could not play it was

said, 'Le garçon est inutile' ('Correspondence,' 1894, pp. 17, 24).

Baretti, who was born in Italy, had travelled through the more civilized countries of Europe, and had spent the best years of his life in London, dwelt with unusual geniality of tone in his 'Manners and Customs of Italy' (1768) on the games of the countries with which he was best acquainted. He could not gainsay the fact that the English were justified in boasting of their whist, that the French had reason in being proud of piquet, and that the affection of the Spaniards for their ombre could not be ridiculed. These were the 'three best games of cards amongst the several that these nations possessed. To obtain a victory or to hinder a defeat at any of these games requires so much quickness and dexterity of mind that . . . even men of good parts are flattered when they are praised for their accomplishment.' While Baretti cheerfully acknowledged the excellence of these amusements, his patriotic zeal led him to claim superiority for some Italian games over the best of other countries. At this date the point is not worth contesting, the more especially as before many years had passed away the Italians renounced all their native games in cards for the foreign pleasure of whist.

Dr. John Moore, father of the gallant and unfortunate General, Sir John Moore, travelled through Europe for five years as 'bear-leader' to the Duke of Hamilton, and on his return to British soil pub-

lished his observations on the society and manners of the countries which he had visited. Among the cities at which the travellers made a lengthened sojourn was Florence, where the manners of the fashionable people filled him with curiosity. It soon became evident to him that the opera-house was the recognised place of resort for the people of quality to pay and receive visits, and that it was 'looked on as a piece of ill-manners to disturb'—not the performers on the stage, but the card-players scattered through the boxes. The travelled physician 'never was more surprised than when it was proposed to him to make one of a whist-party in a box which seemed to have been made for the purpose, with a little table in the middle.' In vain did he venture to hint the propriety of adjourning the party to some other and more convenient place for their play. The ready answer to the suggestion was that 'good music added greatly to the pleasure of a whist-party; that it increased the joy of good fortune and soothed the affliction of bad.' The doctor refrained from contesting the point any longer, and from that time forward, while resting in Florence, generally played some rubbers at whist in the stage-box every opera night ('View of Society in Italy,' ed. 1790, ii. 396, 397).

A letter from a young Englishman called T. Lyseatt, who was at Turin in August, 1758, to Lord Charlemont, is preserved among that peer's manuscripts, and is printed in the Hist. MSS.

Comm., 12 Rep., App., Pt. X., p. 248. He was a jovial youngster, who used to attend the chief parties in that city. One of the best assemblies was held by Madame Martinian, and 'shilling whist' was the rule at her house. At the palace of the Marquis Gorsegne he was requested by the daughter of the house, Madame Richelmi, to 'assist her in playing at whist, which she is just learning.'

A dozen years after the time when Goldsmith rested at Leyden, another English visitor came to that ancient university to study and learn the Dutch language. This was James Harris, the diplomatist, afterwards the first Earl of Malmesbury, and the lively letters which he sent to England included one descriptive of an assembly at that town in 1765. The entertainments of the country at that period were marked by a laudable frugality. Their gaming was limited to florin whist; but there were no talkers in the assembly, as everyone was expected to join in the game. Harris observed 'one candle only at each table, and the custom for your cards is paying sixpence.' Playing was continuous, but it never exceeded the limit of three rubbers, and the time occupied in the amusement generally lasted for two hours, beginning at half-past eight and ending at half-past ten.

The venerable lady, the Countess of Brownlow, who passed away from our midst in January, 1872, at an age far advanced in years, and not until she had left behind for the pleasure of posterity a

pleasant little volume of reminiscences, stopped at the Hague in 1814, and formed one of the party at a *thé* given by Madame Hogendorp, wife of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Card-tables to the portentous number of twenty-six were brought into the rooms, and 'every creature, young and old, played at whist.' The young lady, who just knew enough of its rules to understand the necessity for following suit, was not allowed to escape from the tyranny of the game. She was forced to sit down at one of the tables with three gentlemen she had never seen before, 'and, to add to the pleasure, the one I played with seemed very cross; but good luck was on our side, and we won.' For a demoiselle of her age nothing could be more stupid, and she was heartily glad when the party came to an end ('Reminiscences,' pp. 41, 42).

Dr. John Moore, during his travels in Germany, had an abundance of whist, and thoroughly enjoyed his game. At Hanover he was a constant guest in the rooms of Marshal Sporken, who had been half a century in the army, and had picked up an ample store of anecdote. There he made one of the brave old warrior's company at whist every night. When the party moved on to Dresden, they found society in that bright city imbued with the same love for card-playing. The Duke of Hamilton was admitted to the table over which the Electress presided, while the doctor played two rubbers at whist as the partner of one of the princesses, and had as

opponents the Electress-dowager and the Princess Elizabeth. The doctor was an observant traveller, paying close attention to the habits of fashionable life, but he had never seen deep gaming at any of the German courts. 'What has approached nearest to it has been at masquerades, or where the Sovereign was not present.' It must be allowed that at a later period in the world's history—in the set which old Blucher attended, or among the company to which Henry Bulwer attached himself—the play was not limited to moderate points.

An anecdote by Lord Charlemont, which adds another to the pranks of that *mauvais sujet*, the illegitimate Philip Stanhope, has been given to the world in Dr. Bradshaw's edition of Lord Chesterfield's Letters (i., p. xxviii.). Chesterfield's natural son passed some of his boyhood at Berne with young Eliot, afterwards the first Lord Eliot, and Harte, their tutor. Stanhope was invited to a party where several of the Bernese senators, 'a dignified set of elderly gentlemen, aristocratically proud, and perfect strangers to fun,' sat down to whist. These excellent men—fit companions for their countrymen at Lausanne who played with Gibbon—were so intent on their occupation that the mischievous youngster was able to fasten to the backs of their chairs 'the flowing tails of their ample periwigs, and to cut the ties of the breeches.' He then left the room, and almost immediately re-entered, crying 'Fire, fire!' The 'affrighted burgomasters suddenly bounced up,

and exhibited to the amazed spectators their senatorial heads and backs totally deprived of ornament or covering.'

'About 1760 the laws of the game were revised by the members of the White's and Saunders's chocolate-houses, then the headquarters of fashionable play' (Cavendish, ed. 17, p. 50). These revised laws, nearly all of which were derived in a crude state from Hoyle, were incorporated in every subsequent edition of his work, and settled the disputes at whist for rather more than a century. In 1863 an energetic movement for the revision of these regulations was started by Mr. John Loraine Baldwin, a card-player happily still alive, whose name is rendered permanent in whist memories by the creation of the Baldwin Club. This proposition was brought before the members of the Arlington, afterwards transformed into the Turf Club. A small committee was composed from its members, and the resolution for the appointment was authenticated by the signature of Admiral Rous, as chairman of the general committee of the club. The members were:

Bentinck, George, M.P. for West Norfolk, known as 'Big Ben'—dead.

Bushe, John, son of Chief Justice Bushe, 'a fine player, and one of the most charming men that ever entered a card-room'—dead.

Clay, James, M.P., chairman of this section—dead.

Greville, Charles Cavendish, the diarist—dead.

Knightley, Sir Rainald, Bart., M.P.—now ennobled as Lord Knightley.

Mayne, Henry Blair—dead.

Payne, George—dead.

Pipon, Colonel J. Kendrick—dead.

When their deliberations had ended, they sent the result of their considerations to the Portland Club, the other illustrious card centre in London. A general meeting was held, and the following members were nominated as the Portland Club Whist Committee :

Jones, Henry Derviche, father of 'Cavendish,' chairman of this division—dead.

Adams, Charles, formerly in the army and military professor at Aldershot—dead.

Baring, William Frederick—still alive.

Fitzroy, Henry—dead.

Petrie, Samuel—dead.

Riddell, Henry Matthias, also of Reform Club—still alive.

Wheble, Robert, also of Reform Club—dead.

The suggestions and additions of this second body were at once accepted by the Arlington Club, and in the summer of 1864 the new rules were adopted by the other leading clubs at the West End. They were subsequently promulgated *urbi et orbi*, and immediately deposed the old and imperfect regulations. They have ever since formed 'the standard by which disputed points are determined.'

Down to the beginning of this century the universal game at whist was 'long' whist, at which the points were fixed at ten. The average duration of a rubber under the present system has been estimated at twenty minutes, and in the good old times, when life moved slowly, and lethargy threw a cold shade over whist, a rubber rarely lasted less than forty minutes, and frequently extended to a full hour in time. This was too long even for that slowly-moving age, and occasional efforts were made to reduce the number of points, and to abbreviate the term of the rubber. One attempt at reform is mentioned by Southey in his 'Letters of Espriella,' but the name of the author of the 'heresy' is veiled from view as that of an old Welsh baronet. He lowered the points from ten to six, allowed no honours to be counted, and determined the trump by drawing a card from a second pack, 'so that the dealer had no advantage, and all chance was as far as possible precluded.' The new system attracted but little attention. There were 'few proselytes, and the schism expired with him.' This bold reformer experienced the fate of all his tribe. While he himself gave to his invention the flattering title of *rational whist*, 'his friends, in a word of contemptuous fabrication, denominated it his *whimsy-whamsy*.'

An amusing account of the origin of 'short' whist is given in the little treatise by Major A——, which came out in 1835. It is illustrated with a plate,

the upper part of which depicts a chariot of 1715, 'long and lingering,' with four gamesters seated at a table on the top and playing whist, while the lower section displays the Bath mail of 1815, 'short and sweet,' where four players are similarly seated and similarly engaged. The letterpress contains a short narrative of the rise of short whist, which it assigns to another 'worthy Welsh baronet,' who preferred to eat his lobster for supper when it was hot. 'Four first-rate whist-players, consequently four great men,' when the business of the day in the House of Commons was over, adjourned to the classic rooms of Brooks's to play a rubber while the cook was engaged in preparing some refreshment for their exhausted frames. '*The lobster must be hot*, said the baronet. *A rubber may last an hour*, said another, *and the lobster get cold again or spoiled before we have finished. It is too long*, said a third. *Let us cut it shorter*, said a fourth. Carried *nem. con.*' On they played, and with increased zest, as they won or lost so much the quicker. Their game was resumed after supper, and they continued to play on the new system. 'They were legislators, and had a fine opportunity to exercise their calling.' They decreed that short whist should be the game of the future, and short whist is, in the realms over which Queen Victoria rules, universal. Its sun has never set.

A second, and probably true, explanation of the discovery of short whist is furnished in the admirable treatise by Clay.

Early in this century the last Lord Peterborough —he died on June 16, 1814, when the title became extinct—lost at the game a large sum of money, whereupon his friends with whom he was playing proposed to cut down the points from ten to five, so that he might have 'the chance at a quicker game of recovering his loss.' This new experiment was at once crowned with complete success. Money changed hands with such increased rapidity that the party resolved to urge their friends to follow their example. They were all of them members of the leading card clubs, and they had no difficulty in procuring in the coteries of which they formed part the instant adoption of the novelty. 'It became general in the clubs, thence was introduced in private houses, travelled into the country, went to Paris, and has long since superseded the whist of Hoyle's day.' Clay's authority was the late Mr. Hoare, of Bath—presumably Prince Hoare is the person concealed under this indistinct designation—'a very good whist-player, and without a superior at piquet, who was one of this party, and has more than once told me the story.'

The modern system of short whist possesses several advantages, but they are not unaccompanied by drawbacks. Recent legislation is sometimes pushed through with excessive speed and without due deliberation. Such was the case with this, the greatest alteration ever effected in the game of whist. The reduction in the points changed the

spirit of the game from tediousness into briskness, and the abolition of the system of 'Can you one?' effected a marked diminution in the excessive element of chance. Nowadays, when the game stands at four, the odd trick is sometimes scored against a preponderance of honours, and skill attains an advantage—a legitimate advantage—over luck. But a great mistake was committed in allowing the number of honours that could be scored to remain at the disproportionate figure of four. In the Southern States of America the game used to be fixed at ten, honours being scored, and each trick over six counting two. Occasionally they played with the tricks limited to seven, but now the game is all but universally fixed at five, and played without honours being scored. This is perhaps too drastic a reform. In this country, with the present mode of scoring, chance is often able to assert itself over talent, and the weak player who is favoured by fortune will often and for a long period of time more than hold his own against an opponent of greater merit, but of less fortune.

Since the Regency numerous alterations have been made in the game. When Lord Henry Bentinck introduced the practice of calling for trumps by throwing away a higher card than was necessary, he originated an innovation in the game which he lived to repent, and which, since the date of its creation, has in the hands of weak performers been fraught with disastrous results to their unhappy

partners. Another alteration in the style of the game came from France. The chief French players, after the restoration of the Bourbons—and in the person of Deschapelles they could glory in the possession of the greatest performer that the world has ever produced—played a more forward game than our slower-witted countrymen, and the travelled Englishmen who returned to their native land from a sojourn among the clubs of Paris caught some of the dash of their hosts The first thought of the French was to make the game, and by slow degrees they converted to that principle the most illustrious professors of the science that could be found in England.

In 1854 a few young men of promise who were gathered together in the University of Cambridge began in their spare time to pay a closer study to the principles of the game of whist. The leaders of the party were Mr. Daniel Jones, elder brother of 'Cavendish,' and Edward Wilson, J.P., now resident at Exhall, near Coventry, who was playfully called among his card friends their 'chief.' These two men knew the principles of the game best, and could best put their knowledge into practice. Among the other members of this little group were Charles Baron Clarke, F.L.S. and F.R.S., a Fellow of Queens' College, who subsequently went out to Bengal as inspector of schools, and no doubt helped to elevate the standard of whist in the circles of Calcutta; William Dundas Gardiner; Henry Fawcett, afterwards the

blind M.P. ; another gentleman who is now a rector and rural dean in Norfolk ; and the present Sir John Rigby, but with him the game was rather an amusement than a science. In due course most of the members of the set proceeded to London, and their number was augmented by the presence of Henry Jones, who had been pursuing his medical studies at Bartholomew's. To the influence of these young men may be traced many of the recent developments in the game.

The theories which were then propounded for discussion, and carefully analyzed, are explained in the volume which Henry Jones gave to the world in 1862 under the *nom de guerre* of 'Cavendish.' Many of them can be traced in the text-books of Hoyle and Mathews ; but it was the glory of these men, and notably of Wilson, who resided at Cambridge after he had taken his degree of B.A., that they found in the mathematics of chances the direct proofs of the system of play which they advocated. Since that date great strides have been made, and can be briefly summarized.

When the command in trumps is established against two of the players, their discards should be from their strongest, and not, as in other cases, from their weaker suits. By the adoption of this course some guard is kept on the weaker suits, and the clearest indication is afforded from one to the other of the sources of their strength. When one of them next wins a trick, he should, if he possesses overwhelming

strength in his own suit, at once proceed to establish it. If, however, he is not blessed with a preponderance of wealth, he should endeavour to strengthen the hand of his partner in that suit which by the discard he has indicated to be his strongest.

A little later the echo of the call for trumps was invented. The advantage to the holder of the strong hand in the trump suit in knowing the resources of his partner in that particular is obvious. And so it was gradually laid down as a necessity that the partner of the caller should indicate the number of the trumps which he held in his hand, and the way of supplying this desirable information was for him, if he had four trumps, to echo the call by playing in his turn an unnecessarily high card. If he did not adopt this procedure, it was at once understood by his companion in the game that the trump cards at his disposal did not exceed three in all.

The lead of the penultimate from a suit of five cards was the next novelty in the game. This met with much opposition at the outset, the chief argument against it being its identity in lead from that adopted in weak suits of two, and it must even now be acknowledged that such reasoning was not altogether devoid of force, and that the difficulty is felt even at this date. The advantages of the penultimate lead were, however, generally recognised, and through the advocacy of General Drayson, and

the adoption of his views by the chief American players, prominent among whom was Nicholas Browse Trist, of New Orleans, it has now become an established rule of the game that with five or more cards not headed by an ace or a strong sequence the lead should invariably be from the fourth best in the suit.

The introduction of this improvement led to other means by which suits of four or five cards were indicated. With four cards, consisting of ace, queen, knave, and a small one, the lead of the ace is followed by that of the queen; but with more in number that lead is succeeded by the knave, and this drop in value at once discloses to an acute player that five at least in that suit are held in his partner's hand. The American leads have now become of a more intricate character, but though they are adopted in most of the London clubs by some of the leading authorities on whist, they have not yet come into general use by the majority of players. Many of them require long and elaborate explanation, and the older hands, who are still a majority in number, have not learnt to appreciate their value. The world of whist is passing through a period of transition, and in a few years many principles which are now accepted with doubt, or even openly rejected, may have been numbered among the indisputable axioms of the game.

CHAPTER II.

ARE CARDS A LEGITIMATE PLEASURE?

THE question of the lawfulness of playing at cards or games of chance has been discussed in all generations. It was debated in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and the Scotch James by some of the most learned divines of the age. The foremost champion for their use 'under due restrictions and limitations' was Thomas Gataker, whose name was revived two centuries later by an incidental mention of his treatise in Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets.' 'He that reads Gataker upon *Lots*,' says the kindly sage of Bolt Court, 'may see how much learning and reason one of the first scholars of his age thought necessary to prove that it was no crime to throw a die, or play at cards, or to hide a shilling for the reckoning.' An explanation of the meaning of the last expression was asked for in the pages of *Notes and Queries* for 1888, and the answer came that in earlier years, before the institution of clubs, when a few friends met together for a friendly game at whist, it was customary for each guest before leaving

'to place a shilling under the candlestick, which was intended to defray the cost of the cards, then materially increased by a heavy duty.' The principal demonstrators of the impropriety of indulging in such games were John Northbrooke in his treatise on 'dicing, dancing, Vaine Plaies or Enterludes, with other idle pastimes,' and James Balmford, whose disquisition on 'The Unlawfulness of playing at Cards or Tables' was launched from the press in 1593, and reissued in 1623.

Toplady, when challenged by a correspondent with the momentous question whether it was lawful for him to unbend in card-playing, cited a long array of names in favour of legitimate diversion. Luther played at backgammon for an hour or two after dinner, and if the Reformer's ostensible plea was that the practice tends 'to promote digestion,' his enemies would no doubt have asserted that he loved the game for its own sake. Ridley, before he was promoted to the dignity of the episcopal bench, diverted himself in the tennis-court, and after that rise in position did not disdain the quieter and more secluded amusement of a game at chess. The grave Jeremy Taylor was not conscious of any reason for doubting that 'cards are themselves lawful,' but all such games must not be played for money, but for 'refreshment.' Moreover, although such recreation is lawful, he errs who tempts others to such pursuits who wearies of his business, but not of his pleasure, who sits up till midnight, 'and spends half days, and

that often, too,' in such diversions. Then the game is turned into a sin. Such a restricted measure of approval is in consonance with the opinion of many members of his Church since that date. John Locke, in his treatise on 'Education,' impressed upon his readers that 'the safest and best way was never to learn any play with cards or dice'; but Granville, the generous and faithful Dean of Durham, perhaps the most conspicuous of the few dignitaries of the English Church who followed James II. into exile, inculcated the use of cards in his household 'between All Hallow Day and Candlemas'; and Nelson, the pious non-juror, went so far as to allow of their use at all seasons, but he significantly added that 'sober persons do not make a business of what they should use only as a diversion.'

One of Nelson's contemporaries and friends, Thoresby the antiquary, gave utterance to a contrary opinion, and did not shrink from stigmatizing cards as 'a wicked diversion.' Cowper expressed the sentiments of that evangelical section in the Church to which he was allied when in his poem of 'The Task,' book iv., he spoke of them as invented by idleness 'to fill the void of an unfurnished brain'; but well for him would it have been had he dispelled with their aid some of the fancies which disturbed his own disorganized mind.

A little volume entitled 'Three Dialogues on the Amusements of Clergymen' came out in 1796, passed into a second edition in 1797, and was reprinted in

1820. They purported to describe the talk of Stillingfleet, when Dean of St. Paul's, with a certain Dr. Josiah Frampton; but it was not long before the clerical world became aware that they were the 'imaginary conversations' of Gilpin, the student of forest scenery. In them the use of cards was condemned without reserve. They encouraged little squabbles in the domestic circle of the clergyman's family; their practice descended to the kitchen, and spread thence throughout the parish; by them needless expense was incurred, and too often gaming ensued. Time was wasted, 'evening after evening is lost, and the afternoon is often added.' Poor Gilpin! What anguish would he not suffer were he alive now to enter about five o'clock the card-room of a London or provincial club!

Dr. Johnson is a guide whom most of us are nothing loath to follow, even in his failings, and in his declining days he expressed his regret that he had not learnt to play cards. 'It is very useful in life,' was the simple and natural expression of his views; and then, as was his custom, he developed his idea in the grander sounding terms: 'It generates kindness and consolidates society.' Paley is another guide often set before the studious youth, and Paley strenuously defended a practice which was his nocturnal pleasure. He compares the card-player with the ploughman—it may be with the ideal ploughman. 'Those who spend every day at cards'—the words are taken from his 'Moral and

Political Philosophy,' chap. vi. — 'and those who go every day to plough, pass their time much alike: intent upon what they are about, wanting nothing, regretting nothing, they are both for the time in a state of ease; but, then, whatever suspends the occupation of the card-player distresses him.'

A still more emphatic passage is found at a later place in the same volume (book iii., part i., chap. viii.), for it cuts at the root of the arguments of those who seek to condemn such practices as calling for trumps as dishonest. In this Paley says: 'I might not have it in my power to play with fairness'—he means on terms of absolute equality—'a game at cards, billiards, or tennis . . . once in a twelvemonth, if I must wait till I meet with a person whose art, skill, and judgment in these matters is neither greater nor less than my own. Nor is this equality requisite to the justice of the contract. . . . The proper restriction is that neither side have an advantage by means of which the other is not aware, for this is an advantage taken without being given. . . . If I sit down to a game at whist, and have an advantage over the adversary by means of a better memory, closer attention, or a superior knowledge of the rules and chances of the game, the advantage is fair because it is obtained by means of which the adversary is aware. . . . But if I gain an advantage by packing the cards, glancing my eye into the adversaries'

hands, or by concerted signals with my partner, it is a dishonest advantage.'

One unexpected defender of the practice of card-playing was found in the person of Toplady. He lived in a secluded vicarage in the South Hams of Devonshire, a country parson with theological animosities sharpened in many a controversy. His religious views were those of Calvin, and he wrestled with John Wesley over the doctrines of free grace and election, during the course of which struggle many a bitter epithet was hurled to and fro. But in mundane matters his views were of a more generous nature, and when the unknown inquirer already referred to sought his opinion on the lawfulness of cards, there came from Toplady's retreat at Broad Hembury a long and, strange to say, a favourable response. He could not disapprove of cards as a diversion, and he could not condemn himself for relaxing 'now and then among a few select friends with a rubber of sixpenny whist or a pool of penny quadrille,' more especially as he had been 'cured of the headache by one or other of these games after ten, twelve, or sixteen hours in his study.' He looked back upon his life, and found himself not worse in mind, body, or estate through his relaxation. His conclusion was, 'I neither win nor lose forty shillings per annum' (letter in Polwhele's 'Reminiscences,' ii. 43-48).

An advocate for the use of cards by Dissenting ministers came to a similar opinion with Toplady.

The point was argued in the first volume of the *Monthly Repository*, the organ of the Unitarians, when a prominent champion for proper amusements pointed out that if backgammon, in which 'almost all depends upon chance,' is allowed, whist ought to be still more legitimate, for in it 'a great deal depends on skill, and while a man is engaged in it his rational faculties are on the stretch, and his mind accustomed and obliged to think.' He ridiculed the dictum of his opponents that it was wrong to play for small points, and confidently laid down the doctrine that 'a man may play half the year without being the gainer or loser of a crown, provided his stake be regular and his company usually the same.'

Whatever the opinion of these theologians may be, there could be but little doubt that a large proportion of their clerical contemporaries found pleasure in the game of whist. Arminian and Calvinist, Roman Catholic and Unitarian, representatives of every religious creed, were found seated round the card-table. There was whist in the bishop's palace; it dominated the society of the rural rectory every evening; and the University dons practised it in their combination-room.

Miss Mitford knew every phase in the country life of Berkshire, and described with keen insight the ways of the bachelor parson who ruled the life of the villages around Reading. The love of whist was his, and cards 'were not merely the amuse-

ment, but the business of his life.' Never would he venture outside his usual, his moderate stake, and no blandishment could induce him to accept a bet. He declined to degrade so important and scientific a pursuit into 'an affair of gambling.' When he regarded his contemporaries in clerical life, he adopted their skill or deficiencies in whist as the sole test of ability. A capital player himself, well versed in all the tricks of the game, he was the 'most disagreeable partner in the world, and nearly as unpleasant an adversary.' Not only did he enforce a rigorous silence at the card-table — a practice which makes this feminine critic lament in the slang of her sex that it 'makes one hate whist so'—but he made his comments on the play with strict impartiality and cutting politeness.

A far more pleasant picture of the stately divine of the last century is painted by Praed in one of his most captivating poems. The lines breathe a delightful serenity of tone:

> 'Sound was his claret and his head;
> Warm was his double-ale and feelings;
> His partners at the whist club said
> That he was faultless in his dealings;
> He cut the fiercest quarrels short
> With—"Patience, gentlemen, and shuffle."'

One objection to divines as companions at the whist-table has been expressed by Charles Lever, but in perusing it we may remember that in his later years very little that passed around him met with favour in his eyes. He summed up the whole

class in his critical scales, and saw very little to commend. 'They are in whist pretty much where geology was in the time of the first Georges'—such was his uncomplimentary estimate of their qualities. Still, even he could not but acknowledge the existence of 'a bishop, and a stray archdeacon or two who could hold their own.' To the Roman Catholic clergy he could honestly give a better character, for in the higher ranks good players very often came to the front. One he singled out for special approbation. Antonelli might sit down at the Portland or at the Turf, and compete on equal terms with such an adversary as George Payne.

CHAPTER III.

PRELATES AS WHIST-PLAYERS.

Few archbishops could have been more alien to the disposition of Swift than the placid prelate Tenison, whose influence was ever cast on the side of moderation. They had nothing in common, and Tenison was pilloried by the fiery Dean of St. Patrick's as 'a very dull man, who had a horror of anything like levity in the clergy.' A parson, says Swift in his 'Essay on the Fates of Clergymen' (1728), was once recommended to the Archbishop for preferment by some great man at Court, but the name did not meet with a favourable reception. The charitable side of his Grace's character could be stretched so far as to overlook the playing now and again of 'a sober game at whist for pastime,' but he had heard that his friend's nominee 'used to play at whist and swobbers, and he could not digest these wicked swobbers.' It was not easy for 'my Lord Somers to undeceive' the Archbishop, and to convince him that his patronage could safely be extended to so wicked a suppliant. But the harmless character

of this supplement to the contemporary game of whist was at last made clear to him, and the suppliant for advancement in the Church was more warmly welcomed. Less than a century later a whist-player would have been greeted with effusion at Lambeth Palace.

In the days when Archbishop Cornwallis ruled over its customs the noble game was practised with unparalleled zeal. Cole, the sacerdotal student of Milton, a few miles from Cambridge, whose criticisms on his contemporaries, whether clerical or lay, are buried among the manuscript collections at Bloomsbury or at Cambridge, and in the forgotten volumes of 'Restituta,' had 'the honour of a decent familiarity with his Grace whilst at college,' and seems to have resumed his intimacy in his metropolitan's palace. They often played cards together, and although the Archbishop had lost the use of his right hand through a stroke of the palsy, 'it was wonderful to see how dexterously he would shuffle and play his cards.' His wife was openly taxed in one of the London papers 'with routs on a Sunday,' and there appeared in the columns of the same paper 'several scurrilous squibs and reflections on our Primate.' Majesty, as represented by the conventional person of George III., remonstrated with his Grace on this abuse of the Sabbath, and Cole, who had not a grain of Puritanism in his character, took fright at the news. In a letter to one of the archiepiscopal chaplains he defines his position with preciseness:

'I have, as William Cole, no particular objection to a game of cards, even on a Sunday evening, but as vicar of a parish I should think myself highly blameable to do so in my parish, or as a clergyman anywhere in a country where the prejudice is so vehement against it,' and he protests his disbelief in the newspaper report.

The example of another Archbishop was quoted in a still more exalted position by a more illustrious personage. In the House of Lords, at the close of August, 1831, the mighty Lord Chancellor Brougham made some remarks on Christmas Day, and the 'regulation of shutting the beer-houses' on that religious anniversary. He laid down—and his assertion was not inaccurate—the doctrine that by the clergymen of the Established Church 'Christmas Day was not kept as a day of religion after the usual service was performed.' The point of his definition was proved by the illustration that 'it was an established course at Lambeth Palace, in the time of a late most reverend prelate, to finish the evening with a game of whist. He had it from the late Dr. Parr that the Archbishop of Canterbury before the last knew the regulations of the Church well, and never suffered a Christmas Day to pass without playing a game at whist,' and Brougham heightened his Grace's zeal for the due observance of the Church's customs by the addition, 'although he was not much attached to the game.' This punctilious prelate must have been the fortunate Archbishop Moore,

and we would fain hope that his attachment to the practices of the Church never led him into a more disagreeable situation.

There were many other devotees of the gay science on the episcopal bench. Thomas Hutchinson, the Royalist Governor of Massachusetts Bay, passed many years in London in a full enjoyment of the worlds of politics and fashion. One evening, at the close of 1774, he dined with Welbore Ellis, the Nestor of the Treasury Bench, in Little Brook Street, and after the dinner was over the company was joined by the Bishop of London and many others, both gentlemen and ladies. Three tables of cards were formed, and the diocesan asked the ex-Governor 'what they would say in New England to a bishop's playing cards.' The pleasing response was that 'the prejudice against cards was in a good measure worn off' ('Diary,' vol. i., 329, 330), and no doubt, after this gratifying proof of the spread of civilization, the good Bishop enjoyed his game with even greater zest.

Green, the Whig Bishop Green, that presided over the enormous diocese of Lincoln, passed towards the close of his life much of his time amid the congenial society of Bath, and in such a city found an abundance of worthy partners in his favourite pursuit. One Saturday evening he formed his party at cards as usual, and, after some hours had been well spent, rested tolerably well that night. Life to the last enjoyed, he expired on the morning in

the happiest of ways, 'without a single groan or sigh.' The habits of Bishop Newton, whose autobiography is not devoid of interest for the light it throws upon the disposal of bishoprics by the Prime Ministers of the last century, were cast in a different mould. He never played at cards or any game, and the smug prelate hugged himself with the flattering delusion that in point of time this was 'the addition of ten years to his life.' A stern critic of this generation might add thereto the candid comment that this saving of time has not been productive of any benefit to the world at large, whereas the long hours of the evening, if spent by him in some card game, might have afforded pleasure to himself and added some briskness to his mind. It did not even enter into his philosophy that others might find solace in such a pursuit. His limited range of sympathy led him into constant wonder 'how some worthy persons could bestow so many hours upon such unworthy diversions.'

George Grenville went out of office before a vacancy in a wealthier bishopric than Bristol enabled him to bestow on Newton the promotion in the Church which he longed for so ardently. Pretyman, or Tomline, as he afterwards called himself, when he came into an ample fortune, was more fortunate, for the tenure of office by the Prime Minister to whom he had been tutor lasted sufficiently long for him to fill every see in England with his nominees, and to reward his old master with the wealth of

Winchester. Whist was Tomline's devotion, and uniform success in his cards was the end at which he aimed. He played with his chaplains, and the divine to whom a Pitt had been subject expected and extorted obedience from his subordinates. After the deal had been made, and the cards had been sorted, he selected the strongest suit in his own hand for trumps. The judicious chaplain, who longed for one of the rich rectories which abound in that diocese, always lost, even if fortune had granted to him a still stronger hand.

A writer in *Notes and Queries* for July 23, 1864, who claimed relationship with Tomline, dwelt on his singular good fortune. He had heard that the selection of Pretyman as Pitt's tutor was due to the fact that he passed the window as the Earl of Chatham was engaged with the Master of the college on the question of the tutorship for his son, but this same incident is told by Wraxall (iii. 33) of Archbishop Moore. He had heard of the circumstance which introduced the prelate to the wealthy Tomline. While on a confirmation tour, he arrived late one night at the inn where he usually stopped. To his surprise and consternation, the landlord met him at the door with the news that every room was taken. He asked for the name of the occupant, and when informed that it was Mr. Tomline, sent up his card with the request that he might be permitted to share the sitting-room for the evening. Mr. Tomline complied, and the landlord gave up his own bedrooms, so

the Bishop and his suite were accommodated. During the evening the Bishop and the chaplain played a rubber of whist against Mr. Tomline, who took dummy. From that hour a close intimacy sprang up between them, and in the end Tomline left the Bishop his entire fortune, with the stipulation that he should take the name of the donor.

Such is the story as told by the bishop's relative, but the usual version adds that Tomline only saw him on that solitary occasion. Porson, with his accustomed wit and cynicism, used to add that, had the wealthy old man seen the prelate twice, he would have left his fortune elsewhere.

A similar weakness, as regards the selection of his own strong suit for trumps, is told of the courtly Hurd, the diocesan of Worcester; but in his case the anecdote rests on insufficient authority, and even if its accuracy were allowed to pass unquestioned, the incident would discredit his friends rather than the poor old prelate himself. The narrator is Joseph Cradock, the companion of Dr. Johnson, and the neighbour of Bennet Langton, and his statement is that Hurd, at the close of his life—he lived to nearly the age of ninety—'became quite imbecile at times, and so nearly childish that some of his company desired him to name the trump at whist' ('Memoirs,' iv. 200). The imputation was no sooner made than it was refuted. One of the Bishop's friends—Johnson, the biographer of Parr—nailed it to the counter as 'a reflex anecdote from

a neighbouring diocese and a contemporary right honourable bishop,' words which obviously point to the practices of Pretyman or Tomline, who then ruled over Lincoln. This Bishop of Worcester, indeed, cared little for such games. It was only on 'his birthday about Christmas, which we always spent at Hartlebury Castle,' that cards were produced, and then the company played for no higher stakes than sixpences.

A divine who loved his rubber, though he played his hands but badly, was Horne, the well-known President of Magdalen College, Oxford, who afterwards was elevated to the bishopric of Norwich. This pious man, one of the most exemplary parsons of the last century, is distinguished as 'never manifesting the least ill-humour himself, and repressing it, but with gentleness, in others.' This last trait of character was especially needed for his partners, as the venerable doctor is described in rather eccentric language as 'playing indifferently ill.' Although he had, with his customary prudence, forewarned his partner of his deficiency in skill, the angry query was blurted out, 'What reason could you possibly have, Mr. President, for playing that card?' The scene rises before our eyes. We see the kindly President, the enraged questioner, somewhat restrained in his words by the dignified position of his nominal ally, and the suppressed amusement of their two opponents. The good old divine rose to the occasion. With imperturbable

good humour, he disarmed all further criticism with the sedate answer, 'None upon earth, I assure you.'

In zeal for the game of whist, no member of the episcopal bench was so conspicuous as dear old Bishop Bathurst. He had spent a long life in supporting a freer range of thought within the Church, and in voting in his place in the House of Lords for every measure of reform. The sands of his life were fast running out, and many blamed him 'for playing so much in the evenings at whist'; but he cared little for such censure, as his family had the good sense to encourage him in this practice. They thought, and were justified in thinking, that 'the attention which he gave to the game contributed to sharpen and keep his faculties alive by an amusement of which he was always fond.' Sometimes, as even the intimates of his domestic circle were obliged to confess, the good old man displayed some irritation at the game; but it was not because the stakes were high—as at first they were only shillings, and they were afterwards reduced to the still more modest sixpenny-bits of his brother Hurd, and he was generous enough to pay his son's losses on most occasions—but 'from a native eagerness at anything which he was about, and a little impatience of contradiction.' Once, and once only, did he launch into deeper rage in connection with his favourite game. In one supreme moment of agony, his feelings could not restrain themselves.

On hearing the name of a new appointment in the Chapter, there was wrung from him the passionate exclamation : 'I have served the Whigs all my life, and now they send me down a Canon who doesn't know clubs from spades' ('Memoirs,' ii. 131, 132).

Another episcopal lingerer in the cold shade of Opposition was the keen-witted Bishop Watson, of Llandaff, who fancied that the inadequate income of that see was a sufficient excuse for his dwelling far away from its borders amid the beauties of the English lakes. He, too, was a whist-player whose pecuniary interest in the game was carefully limited. At a dinner which he gave in Cambridge to his most prominent patron, the Duke of Rutland, the company happened to include two of the chief gamblers in the University, both of whom were fellows of King's. One of them pressed the Bishop to take a vacant seat at a table where high stakes had passed from hand to hand. The crafty old Bishop's reply was worthy of his character : 'I have no estate to lose, sir ; I am not desirous of winning one.'

Two of the Bishops of Exeter have been known as card-players. One of them was Buller, who, after a long absence from the West, came back to Exeter to rule over a diocese where his family ranked among the chief of the gentry. With him whist was not confined to the society that gathered round him in his palace at Exeter. He indulged in his favourite game, when on his visitation-tours, in

the presence of the clergy of all shades of religious opinion. It had a softening influence on his disposition. Sterner critics might, indeed, say that under its charm he sometimes relaxed into undue lenity. An old clergyman, a 'squarson' of the Lizard districts in Cornwall, was publicly reproved by Buller in a language and tone of unusual severity for his mutilations and interpolations in reading Divine Service, and on a denial of the charge was confronted by the churchwardens of the parish and convicted of the offence. The Bishop thereupon thundered at him for 'his disingenuousness in thus uttering a falsehood.' In the evening, however, they met at the whist-table, and the culprit was the Bishop's partner. 'After all, Mr. S——, it was but a white lie!' were the smooth words that fell from the Bishop's lips (Polwhele, 'Biographical Sketches,' iii. 170).

It would have required some very good play from a peccant 'squarson' before Phillpotts, the other whist-player among the Western Bishops, would have overlooked an offence against ecclesiastical decorum. Abraham Hayward once saw the redoubtable Henry of Exeter taking a hand in a rubber and playing 'a sound orthodox game' against Dean Milman and an American diplomatist. A run of ill luck pursued him, but he bore it with laudable patience, mixed, perchance, with some feeling of surprise that a defender of the faith should have been treated in such an undeserved manner. His

partner was a Count more versed in the ways of science and society than in whist. The diplomatist puzzled the fighting Bishop with a false card; but his partner lost the game by not returning his lead in trumps. The excellent prelate said little, but his looks were very swords. For a moment it seemed as if he would conclude with such words as he used against Archbishop Sumner for the part he played in the Gorham controversy. But the cloud happily blew over, and sunshine was restored.

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CHAPTER IV.

WHIST WITH THE CLERGY.

Let us descend from this exalted level of episcopacy to the consideration of beings somewhat nearer the range of ordinary commonplace mortals. Let us observe the deans and archdeacons how they play. Their lives are cast in pleasant places—in the dignified retreat of a cathedral close or in the sweet seclusion of a rural rectory. When the duties of the day are done—and their accomplishment does not demand an undue strain on their mental resources—they are able to indulge in their pet pursuits, and among the pleasures of their class has always been reckoned a rubber at whist.

In enthusiasm for the game, few in the higher ranks of the clergy have been found to surpass the practical Paley, and when engrossed in his favourite pastime the popular phrases current in the North of England often fell, unknown to himself, from his lips. On one occasion, when he had triumphed over his antagonists, and the moment for settling had arrived, the joyous words came out, 'Pay the people.

U.P. spells geslings.' To the Southron the expression requires an explanation, but north of the Trent it is familiar in the mouths of men. So far back as 1791 it was noted in the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* as a common exclamation at the conclusion of a game of whist, and it was said to have been borrowed from the slang of the schoolboy, who used it as an equivalent to *væ victis.* U.P., or U.P.K., to give a variation, was defined as short for 'Up pick,' which was explained as a demand upon the loser in a schoolboy's game to pick up a peg, while his comrades buffeted him with their hats and shouted, 'Up pick, you May gesling!' In the North a May gesling was made with as much eagerness as an April fool used to be down South.

Some of Paley's happiest hours in Lincoln were passed in a little club of literary inquirers, where the evenings always ended in a 'barrel of oysters and a rubber of whist.' When he gave dinner-parties in his own house, it was his practice, after dinner had ceased, and the gentlemen had retired from the dining-room to another apartment, to walk round it with a pack of cards in his hand and invite a chosen few to draw for partners. But even then the commercial instincts of his character could not remain concealed. He would suddenly withdraw his hand with the expression, 'Short reckonings make long friendships; pay for your cards,' and would never fail to extract the requisite shilling.

Most of us have heard of the famous divine at

Cambridge in the last century, Dr. Ogden, whose mode of preaching regulated the fashion at the University for some generations. Paley delighted to tell of a trap into which G—— [John Gordon], a precentor of Lincoln, tumbled headlong through a clever trick of Ogden. Gordon—peace to his manes!—manœuvred his cards at whist with considerable skill, and liked a partner who could support his schemes. He endeavoured to raise the tone of the game of the younger men in that sombre city, under the 'windy clanging of the minster clock,' by rebuking their expression of 'playing at whist,' and by observing that they never could without serious study acquire a right notion of the science. Ogden once, when Gordon was at the card-table, placed himself quietly at his side, and noticed that his partner played in such a manner that, according to all the rules of the game, he could not hold a certain card. The game proceeds on that supposition, when suddenly out comes the very card which ought not to have been in his hand. Gordon in a fury burst out with, 'I've been playing all the while in the belief that you had not that card,' when Ogden, 'with his usual preaching tone,' interposed with the remark that 'it could not be *demonstrated* now that he had not that card.' With enhanced impatience Gordon hurled the retort, 'Why, yes, it might, because——' But Ogden would not let him finish his sentence, exclaiming, 'What! when he had it?' They were both of them Cambridge men, and only

by an alumnus of Cambridge can the full force of the word 'demonstrated' be completely apprehended; but even those who have graduated elsewhere can perceive, though but dimly, the purport of the joke.

Some of Paley's sharpest sayings are connected with his favourite game of whist. The salaries of curates did not as a rule run to three figures in pounds at that period of life, nor, indeed, were the stakes in which ordinary parsons indulged of an excessive amount. Of a certain card-playing curate and his wife Paley used to say that they made much more by whist than by the curacy.

A lady who was seated at the same card-table in Lincoln with him was well known to her friends for her affection for the game, but thought it proper to dissemble her love by putting in a mitigating plea for its practice. She remarked to the Archdeacon at one of the intervals in the pursuit that 'the only excuse for their playing was that it served to kill time.' The Archdeacon's answer was, 'The best defence possible, madam, though time in the end will kill us.'

Whist-players seem to have been among the chief aversions of our prosaic monarch, great George III. To Paley he was particularly inimical, and never could be prevailed upon to advance him to a bishopric. One of the best-known illustrations in the 'Moral and Political Philosophy' referred to the practices of pigeons, and this was remembered

by the King. 'No, no, not Pigeon Paley,' was the reply, when the Prime Minister mentioned his name as that of a dignitary worthy of promotion. Another person treated in the same harsh manner was Dr. Vincent, the excellent Dean of Westminster. According to Lætitia Hawkins, some busybody about the Court whispered in the King's ear that the Dean's evenings were spent at whist. 'The royal lips themselves betrayed the slander,' for when the good old fellow came to pay his respects at Court he was greeted with the salutation, 'Well, Mr. Dean, do you play at cards as much as ever?' The Dean was equal to the occasion, and with great presence of mind, and with words suitably courteous, replied: 'I hope whoever told your Majesty that I played at cards said also that my eyes will not serve me to any other purpose by candle-light.' Had he lived some years later, the reply might have been supplemented by the sage advice of the courtly physician, Sir Henry Halford, to a patient in a similar state: 'If you wish to preserve your eyes, never read by candle-light anything smaller than the ace of clubs.'

Good 'Farmer George' is not credited with the authorship of many witticisms, but he did give utterance to one remark approaching a jest. In one of his rides over Richmond Hill he inquired, with his accustomed curiosity, the name of the owner of a stone-fronted house which was in course of erection. The answer was: 'Mr. Blanchard, your Majesty's

card-maker.' 'Ah,' said George, 'that man's cards must have turned up trumps.'

Another of the disappointed divines who, for political reasons, had been balked of their legitimate preferment, was Dr. Parr, and he, too, was a whist-player. Early in life he had allied himself with the cause of the Whigs, and although he has sometimes been accused, notably by De Quincey, of having shown a tendency to rat in one of the protracted periods of depression through which his party passed, he was ever identified in popular opinion with that side. Little promotion for such a partisan could be expected from the powers that ruled after 1780, and Parr was until late in life a man of very limited means.

Like many other good men and good players, he always refused to play except for the smallest of stakes. On one occasion only was he known to break his rule, and that was when engaged in conflict with the keen-witted Bishop Watson. Even then the sole amount which changed hands at the end of a rubber was but a shilling. When the coin had come into his possession, Parr pushed it 'carefully to the bottom of his pocket, and placed his hand upon it with a kind of mock solemnity.' He then addressed his superior in the Church with these words: 'There, my lord Bishop, this is a trick of the devil, but I'll match him; so now, if you please, we will play for a penny,' and never afterwards could he be enticed into exceeding that modest

stake. Parr was the first student of the game of whist to make use of an expression which has now become proverbial in the card-room. All the chroniclers of his life agree in the assertion that he had formed a lofty estimate of his own skill—a belief which seems to enter deep into the minds of all card-players, whether good or bad—and he expected his partners to be up to his standard of play. One night he was engaged with a set in which he was unequally matched, when he was asked by a lady, who knew the foibles of his disposition and his asperity of speech, how his fortunes fared. 'Pretty well, madam,' was the pleasing reply, which he made loud enough for his partner to hear, 'considering that I have three adversaries.'

Dr. Richard Warner, the Rector of Bath, and the author of many volumes on Western antiquities, once played a rubber of whist as partner of Parr, of whom he sarcastically said that he 'either was, or believed himself to be, a great proficient.' For a time the Bath parson committed no breach of the laws of Hoyle, and played his cards according to the recognised rules of the day. Everything went smoothly until, in an ambitious moment, he hazarded a finesse, always a dangerous proceeding with an irascible partner, which failed, and they lost the rubber. The doctor knitted his mighty brows, assumed a Jove-like look, and in words of exceeding severity cried out, 'Dick, you have all the cunning of a Bath sharper, without his skill!' Another

rubber was tried without change of partners, and happily Warner's next hand was a brilliant one. Parr's features assumed their natural arrangement, and in a tone of condescension he drawled out with his usual lisp, 'I acquit you of trickery, Richard; would that I could of stupidity. However, I believe your intention was good, and that's no mean praise' (Warner's 'Literary Recollections,' ii. 187, 188).

Parr and his curate, the Rev. John Stewart, paid a visit to a friend whose house was about twenty miles from their parish of Hatton in Warwickshire. The curate knew his master's weakness, and how he prided himself not a little on his 'scientific precision' at the noble game of whist. Parr played for victory, and not for money. The spoils of the contest he left to others; fame was the object of his ambition. One rubber always amused, and, if he could, that was all he played. When he lost he paid, but he never accepted payment when he won. On this visit his partner, a bold player like Warner, committed a finesse, and finessed to their destruction. Parr made an open and earnest remonstrance, and his partner was provoked into 'a sharp and offensive retort.' His words waxed warmer and warmer, but the more that his partner lifted up his voice, the cooler Parr became, and, retaining all his wits about him, he ended by 'dissecting' his colleague. Stewart, whose description of this scene I have summarized, was not deterred from taking his place at the table on another occasion to share the fortunes

of his lord and master. In the middle of the proceedings Mrs. Parr asked her husband how the curate played his cards, and his answer, the usual mixture of affectation and sententiousness, ran, 'Why, *à la, la game.* Well, I can bear anything unless a conceited player. Ignorance in the imperative is indeed intolerable.' Stewart's pride in his performance knew no bounds. He noted, as the crowning proof of Parr's satisfaction with the exploit, that he usually retired at nine, but that on this eventful night he lingered until long after ten.

Whitaker, the historian of Manchester, differed in politics from Parr, but resembled him in manners. They were both 'bullies' towards their associates, though it must be confessed that, unlike most persons of that class, they had the courage to stand up for their opinions against their ecclesiastical superiors. Whitaker, says his satellite, Richard Polwhele, had 'no silly objection to whist,' if he did not often condescend to such an amusement. To his wife, however, it was the salt of her life. She played every week-day evening in the little set that gathered around her husband's pleasant parsonage, and her conduct met with his acquiescence and with Polwhele's enthusiastic encouragement.

But for the interposition of a Bishop's wife, a zealous card-player among the clerical habitués of Bath would have been debarred from his favourite pleasure. Few guests were admitted to its most select circles with greater pleasure than the Rev.

Richard Abraham, the uncle of Abraham Hayward, and the relative from whom he derived the Christian name which he hated. He was a pluralist in the Church, for he combined in his own person the benefices of Ilminster and Chaffcombe, but on the convenient plea of ill-health he dwelt for many years at Bath, where his talents at whist were often called into requisition by Mrs. Beadon, the wife of the Bishop of the diocese. Such a constant attendant at the card-parties of his spouse did not escape the observation of the diocesan, and one morning, on meeting his clerical subordinate, the Bishop remarked: 'Mr. Abraham, it strikes me, if you can play half the night at whist, you can do duty at your living.' To the Bishop this conclusion was irrefragable, but to his friend it was a *non sequitur*. With admirable cunning, he enlisted on his behalf the services of the lady, and parried his diocesan's attack with the defensive answer: 'My lord, Mrs. Beadon will tell you that late whist acts as a tonic or restorative to dyspeptic people with weak nerves.' The dialogue was soon communicated to the proper quarter. The lady made her friend's case her own, and Abraham remained in Arcadia. So long as her lord lived she formed her card-party at Wells or at Bath, and after his death her whist evenings in her new abode in Mayfair were still more celebrated.

A heretic in the Church of England was Dr. Samuel Clarke, the Rector of the rich parish of St. James's, Piccadilly; but, unlike most heretics, he

basked in the sunshine of Court favour. The clever wife of the second George was his especial patron, and through her favour he continued to enjoy, without molestation, the profits of his ample living. Among methodical men, he ranks as the most methodical. He husbanded his time with infinite niceness—with such care, indeed, that, to waste no time in waiting for interviews or in travel in hackney-coaches, he always carried a book or two in his enormous pockets. Yet this diligent guardian of stray moments would spend, it is noted, 'hours in playing at cards,' and no doubt found his wits sharpened by the process. He was a heretic of the most engaging nature. I have often admired the anecdote of him in Boswell's dedication to Sir Joshua Reynolds of the 'Life of Johnson.' One day when Clarke was 'unbending himself with a few friends in the most playful and frolicksome manner,' he observed Beau Nash approaching. He stopped his game at once, and checked the exuberance of his associates with the words, 'My boys, let us be grave—here comes a fool.'

Among heretics outside the National Church who joined, from different motives, in the noble game, let me mention the illustrious names of Price and Priestley. The former of these polemical divines hated nothing but whist, while his wife, 'a confirmed invalid,' knew little enjoyment but that of an evening rubber. So the doctor, her good husband, who had never played at cards, and grudged the

time which they demanded, gave up his hours to the study of leads and discards. He acquired the gentle art, and in a short time 'would sit down to the card-table every evening and follow suit with a sweetness and cheerfulness that charmed and melted everybody.' The orthodox and the conventional looked on the second of these heretics with greater horror than they bestowed on even Dr. Price. To persons of that class Priestley was a prominent *bête noire*, but those acquainted with his private life knew the many points of attraction which he possessed. The love of whist was among them. For many years of his life he never spent less than two or three hours a day at cards and backgammon, or at chess. At the last game he and his wife used, for some years after their marriage, to play regularly both after the mid-day dinner and after supper. As his children grew up, and were able to participate in the pleasure, the family usually sought for relaxation in a rubber. But the good doctor 'never played for money, even for the most trifling sum.'

The subtle influence of whist spread itself over every kind of parson—from the political to the poetical and the critical. In the dearth of English poets during a large period of the last century, many a young lady, imbued with love of the Muses, was found to admire even the strains of the author of 'Caractacus.' One of these adorers lived to beyond the middle of this century. This was Mrs. Fletcher, the wife of an Edinburgh barrister, who,

through his devotion to Whig principles, at the close of the last century was cut off from practice, and often wanted a guinea. Her name now lives as the author of a delightful volume of biography. She was at York when Mason, as the precentor at the minster, and a man of literary fame, was an honoured guest at all its entertainments, and one day she received an invitation to meet him at an evening party. Many a time had she walked before his door in the minster yard to get a glimpse of his person, but her efforts had been in vain. Now she was 'to be in the same room with him, to watch his countenance, to hear him speak—the anticipation was delightful!' The eager devotee figured 'him an interesting-looking man, worn with deep affliction,' as became the author of a touching monody on the loss of a wife, who had died of consumption at the hot wells under the rocks of Clifton. The illusion was soon dispelled. The announcement of his name at the door of the drawing-room was followed by the appearance of 'a little fat old man of hard-favoured countenance, who squatted himself down at a card-table and gave his whole attention to a game at whist.'

All these clerical examples of card-playing have been drawn from life on this side of the Tweed; but within a mile or two of Edinburgh town the less rigid professors of a Presbyterian creed began to seek, about this same time, the solace of a daily rubber. 'The common people thought to play with

cards or dice was a sin, and everybody thought it an indecorum in clergymen'; but one spirit, more daring than his clerical colleagues, determined upon breaking these bonds, and his example was quickly followed by several of his brethren. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, the well-known 'Jupiter' Carlyle, was the first to play 'at cards at home with unlocked door,', and in a short time two other doctors, Robertson and Blair, followed suit. They were both of them men whose acquaintance was eagerly sought by the laity of their own creed, and they found that on their visits to the houses of their friends the time hung heavy on their hands. They were debarred from golf or bowls by day, and were restrained by national prejudice from playing by night at cards or backgammon. They adopted the example of Carlyle, and 'both learned to play at whist after they were sixty. Robertson did very well; Blair never shone.' Most of us have known a few sexagenarians who have taken to whist in their old age; but to none of them could the words 'very well' be applied. No! The science should be followed with discretion from youth to age, and it has charms for every stage in life. Keble—the saintly Keble—was another of these old-men players. At the close of his days (1865) he wrote to Sir John Taylor Coleridge of his 'nightly rubber or two,' and of his new pursuit he penned the happy phrase, 'A great step in old folks' education.'

When the travelled Englishman, in pursuit of

health, or in dread of a political prosecution, carried his favourite pastime with him into the sunny cities of Italy, he found apt pupils in the Cardinals of the Roman Church. They revelled in the game as a fresh outlet for the exercise of their mental faculties, and were ever in the search for opportunities for the display of their gifts in attack or defence. Among the exiles from their own land, through political feeling, was the Irish peer, Lord Cloncurry, who spent two years (1803-5) in a palace near the Quirinal, at Rome, and moved much in Papal society. Often did he spend a whole morning at a whist-table 'placed between the beds of a Prince and princess,' with a Cardinal for his partner, while their Excellencies, his opponents, comfortably reclined under their warm bedclothes. So the morning glided imperceptibly away until the summons for dinner broke upon their ears. They played on from hour to hour, absorbed in their pursuit, and none of the party, except the Irish refugee, wasted 'a thought upon the fallen state of the great city'!

Thirty and more years later an American traveller, one of the most cultivated minds of his generation, journeyed to Italy and visited the Borgheses in their palace one Sunday evening in 1836. The first thing which Ticknor saw on entering the stately rooms was a select company of seven Cardinals. They were clad in the habiliments of their order, conspicuous in red skull-caps and *pieds de perdrix*, and were sitting at cards, four at one table and three at another.

Similar exhibitions of their Eminences this accomplished American witnessed all the season through. Twenty-one years later the traveller returned to Rome. The scene was changed. In 1857 he did not see a single Cardinal indulging in the pleasures of the card-table. A Pope had risen who knew not the joys of cards. He disapproved of the game. That was enough; the Cardinals around him abandoned their favourite pursuit.

CHAPTER V.

WHIST AT THE UNIVERSITIES.

MANY a veteran in cards, who has passed through life with unswerving affection for whist or piquet, has drawn the first taste from the cup of happiness while an undergraduate on the Cam or the Isis. If the companions have been well selected, if the stakes have been fixed at moderate sums, and the amusement has not been pursued to an unlawful excess, the relaxation of mind must have proved of benefit rather than harm to the legitimate study which is demanded from the ordinary collegian. In such places sumptuary laws, more or less severe, are always imposed upon the residents, and restrictions upon the use of cards often form a part of the official regulations.

Nevertheless, if the college statutes restrain their use in public, Fellows and undergraduates alike join in their exercise in private. A volume on the Oxford colleges — the letterpress of which was written by a divine, who afterwards retired from the controversies of the University to the dignified

solitude of a deanery on the South Coast—contains the record that, by the statutes of Brazenose College, 'cards were allowed only at Christmas'; but the wary chronicler does not inhibit us from believing that the effect of such a limitation was to make their use still more enjoyable during the unauthorized hours of the rest of the year. He contents himself with the statement that this statutory privilege was enjoyed to the full by cards 'having been played in Hall on New Year's Day within the last twenty years.'

A Cambridge satirist, in the poetical part of a music speech in 1730, summed up in no very flattering terms the characteristics of the members of its principal colleges. The student at St. John's was 'cold and ungenial as his native North,' from Sidney to Queen's there reigned a 'continued solemn slumber,' the halls of Corpus Christi College were rusting 'in indolence and ease,' and of the graduates reposing in the courts of Caius, their love of amusement was so conspicuous that 'whist prolonged their balmy rest' (Nichols, 'Lit. Anecdotes,' iv. 530). Nearly thirty years later the lovable Tom Warton furnished Dr. Johnson with a paper for his serial of the *Idler*. It described four days of the life of a Senior Fellow, 'or genuine idler,' at Cambridge, and although the chronicle came from an antiquary at the rival University, the mode of existence was probably not far exaggerated from strict accuracy. Eating and drinking, combined

with an occasional ride for appetite's sake, occupied the larger portion of the day. His amusement on Tuesday afternoon consisted of a game 'at backgammon for a brace of snipes'; on Wednesday, after an especial feast at Peterhouse to try a particular dish, the party 'sat late at whist.' The insidious influence of the game had spread through the mazes of fashionable life for the previous twenty years. Now it had brought under subjection the dreamers in the common rooms of the Universities.

The third place in the ranks of the great classical critics on the Cam under the Georges would probably be assigned, by common consent, to Jeremiah Markland. If his reputation does not bestow on him a higher place than on Bentley or on Porson, the fault came from a superabundance of leisure, and from the lack of energy that a prodigality of vacant time is wont to produce. His opportunities for work were abundant — any and every day could be given up to his studies; and so week after week passed away without any addition to his criticisms. His friends noted at last that his energy was never displayed save at a game of whist. He loved his rubber, and made it a source of income. A hundred and fifty years ago he wrote in one of his letters of a contemporary at Cambridge as his 'acquaintance and great benefactor, for I won £100 of him at whist, and got it every farthing.' For gamblers whose income did not

exceed that of the fortunate winner, this was indeed a large sum.

The pursuit of whist at Cambridge was rife about 1780, when Henry Gunning—to whom we are indebted for two of the most amusing volumes of anecdotes ever published—mentions his frequent invitations to a rubber. Such a pleasure he could never resist, and it was only mischievous—such is the belief of his old age, when he indulges in a retrospect of his life—in one respect, 'that it occupied the time from half-past six till nine,' the hours in the then arrangement of University life best adapted for study. Their stakes were not extravagant, for short whist had not come into being at that time. 'They played shilling points, and occasionally half a crown was betted on the rubber.'

Only twenty years have passed away since his death, but the name of Charles Babbage is now all but forgotten. His quarrels with the workmen over the construction of the calculating machine have faded away into forgetfulness. Hushed now are his differences with the froward tribe of organ-grinders. In his old age the epithets of fretful and peevish would have been applied to him. In youth he was a genial companion, admitted to the best society at the University. One of the sets at Cambridge to which he was most attached rejoiced in whist, and limited the stakes to sixpenny points. 'It consisted of Higman, afterwards tutor of Trinity; Follett, afterwards Attorney-General; of a learned and

accomplished Dean, still living [1864], and I have no doubt,' says the philosopher, 'playing an excellent rubber; and myself.' If their play was not deep, it was certainly long, 'for not unfrequently we sat from chapel-time in the evening until the sound of the morning chapel-bell again called us to our religious duties,' and it was equally certain that their devotion to cards caused but little interference with their rise in after-life.

Sometimes Babbage joined another, but a very different, section of card-players, whose haunts were in the remote courts and cloisters of Jesus College. 'They played high—guinea points, and five guineas on the rubber'; but the stranger from another college was always a most welcome guest, for he invariably declined to play for higher stakes than shilling points, and five shillings on the rubber, and, in whist parlance, was 'taken over' by his partner. The fortunate player with Babbage enjoyed a great and recognised advantage, 'namely, that of playing guinea points with one of our adversaries and pound points with the other.' The names of the performers in this society are hidden from us, and perhaps that is for the best. Their subsequent career was not, in all probability, crowned by an abundant measure of success.

Whist seems to have been pursued at Cambridge in all generations and with equal ardour. A few more years passed away, and Sir Charles Lyell came down to Trinity Hall for a week's visit, probably for

that Christmas week when its Fellows, past and present, 'feasted and drank deep.' Every night, after the banquet was over, the company sat down to whist, and the gains of this particular guest proved enough for the payment of his expenses, though he does record, with charming naïveté, that he 'revoked one night.'

Another interval of some ten years passes away, and one of the most distinguished physicians from London comes down to Cambridge for the annual Port-Latin day at the college of which he long enjoyed one of its brace of medical Fellowships. The dinner is over, and he sits down to his rubber. Hand succeeds to hand; but whoever the dealer may be, the fortunate physician riots in an affluence of cards. His patience becomes exhausted. 'I can stand this no longer,' he exclaims; 'these cards are too good to be wasted on such miserable points. I will go back to London.' He leaves the company, speeds back to his club in town, and, so runs the legend, carries the same good fortune with him.

An amusing, if improper, instance of the love of whist among the undergraduates at St. John's is narrated in Mr. Thorpe's pages of autobiography. The new chapel, one of the glories of Gilbert Scott, had not yet sprung into shape. The collegians met in the old unpretending structure, and some of the younger members were placed in Bishop Fisher's chantry at its south-east corner. Its occupants were screened from the view of all but two or three

dons, whose eyesight had been blunted by time, assisted by reading, and so its frequenters brought with them books, and other means of diversion. This snug corner was known popularly as the 'Iniquity,' and the sitters within its recesses pursued their nefarious practices for many years without check or interruption. One day retribution came upon them. In the hush, while the reader was finding the first lesson, there arose from the 'Iniquity,' to the astonishment of the Senior Dean, the appalling words, 'What's trumps?' Such amusements were known no longer in the chantry, but in the rooms of the undergraduates similar expressions might be heard nightly. When the name of a well-known politician now living, who became a high wrangler about half-way between 1850 and 1860, was mentioned by a college contemporary in my presence, it was accompanied with an expression of surprise at the honours which he carried away, as his evenings were always spent in the study of whist or backgammon.

The style of play now generally associated in card circles, either by invention or adoption, with the player who assumed the name of 'Cavendish,' was first practised in the little set of young men—their names are chronicled on a previous page—who met together at Cambridge in 1854. At that time 'Cavendish' was not included in their ranks, as he was then employed in working out his apprenticeship in medicine at a London hospital; but when the

little band of whist students had completed their course at the University, and had removed to London in quest of fame and fortune, he was admitted to their company, and the fame of his colleagues in play is now absorbed in his own.

Against such a long list of proficients on the banks of the Cam, the sister University makes but a poor show. There were a few, but only a few, circles in which whist prevailed. One of the centres of card life was at the rooms of Dr. John Burton, Canon of Christ Church, who died in 1825. He is pithily described as an 'amiable, gouty, uninfluential old gentleman,' and during his long tenure of the canonry—it lasted from 1793 to 1825—his rooms were distinguished for gossip and sober whist on his part, and by the crowded routs and blue-stocking coteries which were the delight of his daughter. Another set congregated at the house of the widow of Timothy Neve, a Bampton lecturer, and a Margaret Professor of Divinity. She lived in an old mansion called Beam, opposite Merton College chapel, and it was her daily boast that her drawing-room, small as it was, had often accommodated seven card-tables.

One pre-eminent name in the past history of Oxford does, indeed, rise before us as a whist-player, but rather as one bent on temporary amusement than on distinction as an expert. This was Mansel, who, on one occasion, when Professor Chandler was in his company, sat in enfeebled

health, tired and disinclined to read. His friend realized that some form of amusement would be good for the sufferer, and 'proposed a game of single dummy whist.' The third person in the room thereupon cried out that the house did not contain a pack of cards. A droll twinkle in Mansel's eye at those words attracted the notice of the Professor, who at once exclaimed to the doubter: 'But you would play if cards could be found?' and with equal promptitude received the answer of acquiescence. Mansel, 'with a most comical face,' left the room, and in a few minutes returned with a box containing some counters and two packs of cards, almost unused. They sat down at the table and played 'such games of whist as have rarely been played.' Mansel was drawn out of himself, his laugh rose louder and louder, and when the games were over 'he was quite another man.' If cards were first used in Europe to divert a sick monarch, they were equally efficacious in removing the indisposition of the Oxford philosopher. They augment the happiness of mankind at every stage of existence and in every mood of the mind.

CHAPTER VI.

WOMAN'S WHIST.

The question whether ladies should play whist is one which has often exercised the feminine mind. In October of four years ago this absorbing matter was discussed in the columns of a paper published mainly for the reading of women. Some weeks were spent in giving the reasons which brought the writers to a definite and affirmative conclusion, and never was the difference between man and woman more markedly shown than in the discussion. Were such an inquiry addressed to man, the ready response would be, 'Yes, if they like it.' But with women the case is far different. Yes, they should play whist—in that all the writers were agreed—but not because it was a pleasure to themselves. They should play whist, and should play it 'to exalt that mean thing man.' Thus could ladies amuse a father, a husband, or a brother 'confined to the house by gout or rheumatism,' and brute enough not to care for days spent in the more refined pleasures of books or music. Thus could ladies help to keep the game

within reasonable bounds, and restrain man—that wicked man!—from gambling at heavy stakes. Their presence would add to the pleasure of the lords of creation, and would drive far, far away the occasional oath, the evanescent expletive. These were their reasons; but most men would have parted with them all for the one simple statement, that whist, or, indeed, any other game, should be played by those women who like it.

Whatever may be the opinions of these casuists in petticoats, there can be no doubt that for several generations past the majority of women have settled this question in the manner which best suited their fancy. There were learned women, and there were pretty women—there were some both learned and attractive—amid the arid wastes of the last century, and there never was a time when women rejoiced more in the pastime of cards. What picture of Bath, of Tunbridge Wells, or of Harrogate, would be complete without the representation of a drawing-room crowded with card-tables, at which ladies, both old and young, would be sitting?

Professor Pryme's volume of 'Recollections' contains the record of his own keen observation, and of the reminiscences of the past which he had derived from those who went before him. One anecdote, supplied by his mother, conveys a graphic touch of the curiosities which then prevailed in social life at that famed watering-place of Harrogate, in Yorkshire. She had spent some weeks in the

company which collected there from the three kingdoms, and had herself seen the blinds down 'in a room lighted up in the middle of Sunday at the Green Dragon, Harrogate,' while a lady of title from Ireland, whose name is not further revealed to us, was playing at cards with her friends. Mrs. Pryme was more than once a witness of bouts of ladies at cards which rivalled the feats of the fashionable gamblers in the clubs of St. James's Street. She paid an annual visit to a lady near Nottingham who collected around her a small circle of friends of her own sex. On two or three occasions the party was joined by six ladies, who 'for three days played at quadrille, commencing directly after breakfast, without ceasing.' Four of them formed the card-table, and two sat out while the others played, waiting in patience for the happy moment to arrive when two of the performers were forced into rising from their seats and leaving two vacancies for they themselves to fill in their turn.

The ruling passion strong in death is exemplified in the last days of the old lady said to be commemorated by Goldsmith. When on her death-bed the curate of the parish was summoned to her side. A game at cards was proposed, and they continued to play until all his money had passed into her hands. It was then necessary to make fresh arrangements for finding further capital, and it was proposed to continue the game with 'her funeral charges' as the stakes. Fortunately for the poor

curate, this ancient dame expired before a definite settlement had been agreed upon, and the fees for her interment were not lost to the Church.

One of the greatest card-players of the last century was the Princess Amelia, aunt of the third George, a Princess famous throughout fashionable life for her love of pleasure. She had probably been imbued with love of the gay science from early youth, for the 'Court Gamester' of Richard Seymour was published for the benefit of the young Princesses who were daughters of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George II., and she was one of the number. In her old-maidenhood her person was familiar to the frequenters of Bath, for she visited that city every year, seeking health from its springs and amusement from its card-tables. Her conduct shows that it is not only in the present age that a royal personage can dictate the manner at which the hosts dispensing hospitality to royalty shall pass their evenings. The practice existed generations ago. The difference was that a hundred and twenty years since such illustrious beings never condescended to pay a visit at any house save that of a social equal. One day, this arbiter of fashion announced to her friend, the Countess Temple, that she proposed paying a visit to her at Stowe, and that she intended to bring her, 'with your leave, Lord Bessborough, for to play at whist in the evenings.' In this fashion the Princess would enjoy her game, and she ventured to add the hope that

her host, 'Lord Temple, won't dislike to have a virtuoso admire what he is a-doing.' Such was the language of a great lady, a leader of fashion, who selected, at her own free will, the houses at which she would stop, and the games at which the company should play. Lord Bessborough must have been one of the 'crack' players of his time. He is mentioned in Lady Mary Coke's 'Journals' (ii. 315) as paying a visit in July, 1768, to General Conway's house of Park Place, near Henley-on-Thames, when, as he could not play Pope Joan, the company gratified him with a game at 'whisk.'

Many of her sisters in sex, though far different in position, resemble the Princess in her tastes. Take, for example, a lady of a very dissimilar nature, the learned Elizabeth Carter. She could translate Epictetus from the original Greek, but she possessed all the natural desire of women for social gaiety. A lady of a later generation, Mrs. Somerville, who excelled the rest of her class in scientific knowledge, owned to liking a dance, and to not being above the enjoyment of a flirtation, and Mrs. Carter was like unto her. She sipped her tea—and her biographer allows that she sipped it in 'pretty large quantities' —and she 'played her cards like the rest of the company.' The admission is reluctantly drawn from him that she was 'rather fond' of this amusement, and was just 'a little inclined to be proud of her skill in the science of whist'; but his feelings of pride in his relation force him to add that she

'certainly played not ill'—a qualified boast modified, through his natural candour, with the acknowledgment that 'she could hardly be said to excel in it.' Against gaming or high play Mrs. Carter, with admirable resoluteness, set her face. When whist had become the general game, and 'the rage for quadrille had ceased, she laid down to herself a rule, from which she never afterwards departed, of playing for no higher than threepenny points.' This was deemed a 'peculiarity,' but it was a peculiarity which was not grudged to her by her friends in the country, and in the town also, where she sometimes played in small parties. There was always some kindly antagonist 'who would oppose her on her own terms, though the general stake was higher.'

Another lady of the last century famous in literature, but belonging to a very different set from that in which Elizabeth Carter moved, was Mrs. Macaulay, the historian. They were both natives of the county of Kent, and there the similarity ended. Mrs. Macaulay, the daughter of an opulent squire named Sawbridge, was educated under her father's eye in the solitude of his house at Wye, situate a few miles from the city of Canterbury, and was fired by his example into an ardent sympathy with Republican Rome. History was the subject of her study; cards became her amusement. Her brother, the reforming Alderman Sawbridge, ranked, in the opinion of most experts of the game, as the leading whist-player of his time; but his sister was

possessed of greater enthusiasm than excellence in the game. One evening, so the story runs, she was engaged in a rubber at which that coarse cynic, Dr. Monsey, had taken a place, and her delay in deliberating as to the card which she should put down wore out his patience. With 'blunt sincerity' the rough old physician of Chelsea Hospital blurted out that the table had waited for her some time, whereupon the lady, with equal ardour and greater anger, retaliated that he must be mistaken, 'as she was known to be always very quick at cards.' Little, however, did this retort benefit her, for the brutal Monsey at once replied: 'If so, yours, madam, is a new species of celerity.' Was the lady justified in her resentment? Great as is the sympathy of most of us with her at the coarse attacks to which her opinions in politics often exposed her, it is impossible to adopt her cause at the card-table. There is no nuisance at whist so great as the player, whether male or female, who hesitates, touches four cards, and then plays a fifth, perhaps the worst which could have been selected.

Let me, as a corrective to this exhibition of feminine anger, quote an anecdote or two which shall far outweigh the scale in woman's favour. Who would select for a display of sympathetic kindness the name of the Imperial Catharine of Russia? And yet a few such incidents are narrated of her. She was a devotee of whist, and frequently gave 'little whist-parties, at which she sometimes

played and sometimes not.' On one of these occasions, when she was passing from table to table, taking a survey of the various hands and the different modes of treatment by the contending players, she rang the bell to summon the page-in-waiting from the ante-chamber. 'No page appeared. She rang the bell again. Again without effect.' The Empress left the room 'looking daggers,' and did not return for a very considerable time. The company supposed that the culprit was already writhing under the knout, or speeding, under military protection, to the steppes of Siberia. Far different was his fortune. The page was found, like his betters, busy at whist, and in the possession of so interesting a hand that he could not tear himself away even to answer the summons of his august mistress. The touch of nature which makes us all akin seized on the Empress. With kindly feeling, almost without a parallel in the record of her life, 'she despatched the page on his errand, and then quietly sat down to hold his cards until his return.' This genial act of the tyrannical Empress is worthy of quotation as the crowning proof of the softening influence which the pursuit of whist can exercise over the human mind.

At this period in the history of Russia it used to be the custom, when playing at whist, to keep a record of the state of the game, not by the markers which were common in other countries, but by means of 'pieces of chalk in a little case of silver or

ivory, with which the amount of the game was scored in figures on the green cloth.' Momonof, the recognised favourite of Catharine II., was always admitted to the card-table at which the Empress sat, and as he was possessed of some knowledge of drawing, and of some manual skill in designing, his habit was to take the chalk and draw a series of rough caricatures on the table. While the favourite was engaged in this occupation, his Imperial Sovereign, with the cards in her hand, condescendingly waited till he had finished his scrawl and was once more ready to proceed in the business of the hour.

A lady of handsome looks and refined manners—one of the many attractive faces made familiar to us by the mezzotint engravings from the pictures of Sir Joshua Reynolds—has come down to us as one of the most ardent card-players of the last century. This was Mrs. Abington, the 'Miss Prue' of Reynolds, whose portrait, full of an arch vivacity, shines down upon us with inspiriting loveliness. She had her card-parties, 'of which she was very fond, and they were attended by many ladies of the highest rank'; and to maintain them from year to year, according to J. T. Smith, she resorted to a feminine expedient. Her means at the close of her life were but small, and they are said to have been brought low through her losses at cards. In order to nurse them, she restrained from wasting her resources in foreign travel or in costly visits to fashionable watering-places in her own country. To

keep her presence in London unknown from prying curiosity, she took, during the dead months, a small lodging 'in one of the passages leading from Stafford Row, Pimlico, where plants were so placed at the windows' as to restrain the inquisitive passer-by from gazing at the occupants; or perhaps, for a change, she would take 'the small house at the end of Mount Street, and there live with her servant in the kitchen.' Then, on the return of the months when life in London was again possible for ladies with aristocratic acquaintances, Mrs. Abington would return to her accustomed abode, her card-parties would again become centres of attraction for her distinguished friends, and she would listen with silent amusement to the compliments of her visitors 'on the effects of her summer's excursion.'

The Anglo-Indians who dwelt in Calcutta in the palmiest days of John Company, and battened, with but little check from Leadenhall Street, on the spoils which they wrung from the native princes, gambled among themselves for immense sums. Their income was easily made, and much of it was quickly spent. Had they but retained the emoluments of their position unimpaired by excessive luxury or inordinate gambling, the gains with which they returned to England, enormous as they were, would have exceeded expectation. A lady who visited Calcutta about 1785—her name is given as Miss Sophia Goldborne — describes the card-tables which she saw in its saloons. Whist was

the fashionable game in the politest circles of Bengal, and ten pounds was considered a very moderate sum for points. Even when ladies were playing, a couple of hours was long enough to bring about a transfer of several hundreds of pounds. The most conspicuous proficient among women was Lady Anne Monson, a clever dame, with 'many shining social qualities,' and with general reputation among her friends of both sexes as 'a very superior whist-player.' Her talents of conversation and skill in cards were inherited from Charles II., for she was by birth a Vane—the eldest daughter of the first Earl of Darlington, and the grand-daughter of Charles through descent from his son, the first Duke of Cleveland, by Barbara Villiers, Lady Castlemaine. Her second husband was the Hon. George Monson, Colonel of the 50th Regiment of Foot, and member of the Supreme Council of Fort William. She died on February 17, 1776, and his death followed at Hooghly on September 25. They were buried side by side in South Park Street Cemetery, Calcutta, and the recollection of her brilliant qualities was long cherished by Sir Philip Francis and her other admirers in society and at cards.

A celebrated figure in the leading circles of the aristocracy in the twin countries of Scotland and England was Kitty, Duchess of Queensberry, a lady celebrated in her girlhood by Prior, and by Horace Walpole in her old age. Throughout her long

life she loved to be immersed in gaiety, and her originality of character endeared her still more to the wits of the Georges. She gave a masquerade, and when the witching hour of twelve struck she dismissed half her guests, and allowed only her especial friends to remain to supper. One Sunday night in winter she held 'a great card rout' at her house. The mob heard the news, and assembled in tumultuous crowds. A great riot ensued—the ducal windows were broken, and the hostess was accused of having brought shame on a Christian nation. In the following October her eldest son, while travelling with his parents and wife, 'shot himself with a horse-pistol on the road beyond Newark' ('Stukeley Memoirs,' iii. 473), and the sad event was generally considered a judgment.

Nothing could rob the Duchess of her love of pleasure. Towards the close of her life, Smeaton, the engineer, casually made her acquaintance in Ranelagh Gardens, and the chance meeting proved the foundation of a permanent friendship. Smeaton detested cards, but the insatiable appetite of the ducal pair for such amusements drew him into the vortex of play. He was frequently pressed to join their set, and although the points were high, he could not resist their entreaties. At one of these gatherings he took from his pocket a scrap of paper, pencilled some calculations thereon, and then gave as his stake the value of his house and land at Austhorpe, remarking at the same time, to ensure

greater emphasis to the act: 'If your Grace will make a duke of me, I presume the winner will not dislike my mortgage.' The result was satisfactory to everybody. From that moment the stakes became 'the merest trifle.'

Another lady of title, described in the peerages as 'of well-known eccentricities,' which were duly transmitted to her son, the third Earl of Orford, spent the chief part of her life among the Courts of Italy. Her private fortune was about £4,000 a year, and the cheapness of living in Southern climes enabled her to spend it to the greatest advantage. Henry Swinburne saw her at Naples in January, 1777, and took note for us of her faults. She had many, as the readers of Horace Walpole's letters well know, for that sprightly writer did not spare anyone whom he disliked. Among her peculiarities, to give them no harsher title, was that, at the end of every hand, she invariably added, 'and two by honours'—a declaration by which, unless she was playing with persons accustomed to her pranks, and bold enough to question the accuracy of the statement, she often added to her score two more than was her due. Her own faults did not prevent her from dwelling severely on the foibles of others, and she was marked as scolding, impartially and 'famously,' both her partner and antagonists.

This self-exiled dame gave many parties and possessed many satellites. Among the toadies that

clustered around her, and generally made up her whist-parties, was a Mrs. Sperme. A card-party was made up at Lord Tilney's palace, and among the guests were that lady and her patron. The lesser star of the two was, during the game, seized with a great fright. She had dealt, and, by a strange coincidence, of late years somewhat divested of its marvel, had given herself the whole thirteen trumps. Her first thought was that Lady Orford would accuse her of cheating—'at least by innuendoes if not openly.' In her agitation she rose from the table, and asked permission to speak to the noble host. This was, of course, granted, and Mrs. Sperme told the tale of her distress to Lord Tilney. 'What am I to do?' was her anxious inquiry. 'Do, madam?' said he; 'why, play them out, to be sure.'

After years of literary labour, undertaken for reasons worthy of the highest admiration, Mrs. Trollope retired to Florence to spend the autumn of her life in calm repose. Whist was her delight, and whist was the staple amusement at her weekly reunion. Every English-speaking visitor received an invitation from the kindly dame, and among her guests appeared 'everyone of any note, and many of no note at all.' When she expected to find that a particular person was a devotee of her favourite game, and was mistaken in the supposition, her expressive face could not conceal the marks of her disappointment. Mrs. Jameson came to one of her parties, and was received with great affection; but

it soon turned out that the illustrious art critic 'did not know one card from another.' This was too great a blow for the older lady; she could not suppress her mortification, and Mrs. Jameson saw it depicted on her face.

The men who came to Florence regarded Mrs. Trollope with mixed feelings, according to the nature of their dispositions. Lieutenant-Colonel Balcarres Dalrymple Wardlaw Ramsay—Phœbus! what a name!—made the acquaintance there, in 1839, 'of two very charming old ladies, Mrs. Somerville and Mrs. Trollope,' and has noted them down in his 'Rough Recollections'—two volumes of military and social anecdote which are not so familiar to the public as they ought to be. The former welcomed him with extreme kindness, for she was a typical Scotchwoman, and 'her heart warmed towards a Scotch boy.' Mrs. Trollope admitted the young officer to her whist-parties, and conferred on him the honour of being her partner. The union proved happy, for the experienced dowager treated his weaknesses with indulgence, and always kept him amused.

To her fellow-novelist, Lever, her society was not grateful. The Grand Duke invited them, as well as the other illustrious English men and women staying in his capital, to his receptions, and as both the novelists were enthusiasts for whist, they lost not a moment in seating themselves at the tables. Fortunately, there was more than one set, and it was

a great amusement to watch the transparent manœuvres of the pair. He set his mind upon playing without being driven to take Mrs. Trollope as a partner, while she employed all her tactics in a fruitless endeavour to secure the company of her colleague in literature.

At the whist-tables of the Regent, in the Pavilion at Brighton, quite a little bevy of ladies used to take their places. Society in this bizarre building sometimes 'affected a homely character,' and if the ladies who assembled there did not rank among the ladies of social fashion, their names were not surrounded with the scandalous stories which attached to several of his feminine favourites. Lady Clermont and Lady Haggerston were usually two of the set which played at the Prince's table. The former was the wife of an Irish peer; the latter, a very beautiful dame with a pretty little villa at the Spa at Brighton, had married a Northumbrian baronet.

In spite of a certain brusqueness of manner, Sir Jeffry Wyattville, the architect for the enlargement of Windsor Castle, was one of the chief favourites of George IV., and he proved a very expensive favourite for the British public. Enormous works were planned, and although the estimated cost was considerable, the money expended nearly doubled the contemplated outlay. Sir Jeffry's widow long outlived him, and was equally remarkable with him for sharpness of speech. Sir John Easthope, the

proprietor of the *Morning Chronicle*, was spending a holiday in 1853 at the Bains de Tivoli, a private hotel in Paris. Charles Mackay, the well-known newspaper writer, was a visitor in the same hotel, and was invited to Sir John's private room to play a rubber. His partner was Lady Wyattville, a sharp, active old woman over eighty years of age, but still preserving traces of her youthful beauty. She revoked, and was accused of the crime, but met the accusation with vehement denial; and when the proofs of the charge were produced, treated her accuser with 'haughty disdain, and not very polite contradiction.' Sir John lost his patience, and, rising from his chair, rasped out with abrupt anger: 'Madame, you are a cheat!' Her eyes flashed fire; she rose from her chair, and advanced towards the offender. By this time he had recovered his coolness and presence of mind, and was only bent on extricating himself from a false position. 'Yes, madame, I repeat it—you cheat abominably; and in the course of a long life,' he added, laying his hand upon his heart, 'I have invariably noticed that the handsomer a woman is, the more she cheats at cards.' This compliment to her person, at the expense of other qualities, produced the desired effect. She resumed her seat, with smiles mantling her face. In the words of Mackay, 'the tigress became the dove' ('Through the Long Day,' i. 269, 270).

Many anxious moments were passed by Mrs. Thrale

through the diverse disposition of her eldest daughter. The unlucky woman was like the hen that sees the ducklings that it has hatched take to the water. She could not understand the young lady's tastes. Miss Thrale, who afterwards became the second wife of Admiral Lord Keith, could not be brought by any feminine arguments to join in the amusement of dancing. She possessed many accomplishments, some of which were uncommon in her day, and she possessed great good sense and determination of judgment. She played on the harpsichord, had been instructed in general knowledge by Baretti, and trained in Latin by Dr. Johnson, but 'she never could be brought to love dancing.' This, above all others, was, in her mother's eyes, the essential point of a girl's education, and in her emergency the perplexed woman appealed to Dr. Johnson for sympathy and advice. The sage returned an answer, neither unsympathetic nor unwise, soothing her anxiety by an appeal to the future. 'Miss may change her mind,' were his first words, and they then passed into the confident assurance, 'and will change it,' if not immediately, yet in the not very distant date, 'when she finds herself get more credit by dancing than by whist.' A third alternative then presented itself. She may remain in her present mood. Yes; but even then—and this is fresh consolation for the distressed parent—'the harm is none.' Miss Thrale did not change her mind, and her mother at last began to realize the dissimilarity of their moods.

With women as with men, the charm of whist holds in its thralls the most varied sections of life. The reckless and the thrifty, the cautious and the impetuous, all alike acknowledge its supremacy. One of the most thrifty—the word 'parsimonious' might, indeed, be applied to her without any deviation from accuracy—of women was the wife of Nollekens the sculptor. But she was very fond of whist, and when in a pleasant vein would employ all her powers of coaxing over her husband to induce him to join in the game at home. In company, however, her love of economy asserted itself, and when her spouse was in society with her, he was rarely, very rarely, permitted to form one of the whist-players, 'as he played so badly that he was sure to lose.'

Two of the cleverest women in London in their day were Fanny Kemble and Mrs. Procter, both of whom died but a few years back, when the world lost an abundance of anecdote on the literary and theatrical celebrities of this century. They were devoted to whist, but could not be said to have attained to that distinction in cards which some of their sex have reached.

Of the cautious and discriminating woman Harriet Martineau is as good an example as can be cited. Fired by the eloquence of Mr. James Payn, she learnt from him the arts of whist and cribbage, and enjoyed them excessively. Whist is a game that should be studied from youth to age, and those who

shut their eyes and minds to its charms until their years are far advanced in life can never arrive at perfection. 'At whist,' says her witty preceptor, 'she was not A 1, or, rather, "Major A 1," but she made up for this defect by her proficiency in the other pursuit. At cribbage she rivalled Sarah Battle.' This sage political economist was firmly bent against gambling, or any approach to it, but the glozing tongue of her instructor 'so far undermined her principles as to induce her to play for penny points.'

Very different from this cautious and calculating lady was that restless and sprightly dame of France, the Duchesse de Dino, afterwards Duchesse de Sagan. The niece of Talleyrand, she resided in his house in Paris, and presided over his social entertainments. Like her famous uncle, whose name will be forever linked with whist all the world over, she was an enthusiast in that noble diversion, but her companions at the card-table were related to her in a manner not likely to be paralleled again. She pushed, in the language of Abraham Hayward, the 'Protestant liberty or license of divorce' to an extremity which can only be equalled among the dwellers in some of the States of America. She had been given in marriage so often that she was in a position 'to play at whist with three ex-husbands, whilst a fourth betted on her.' Her means were large, but each of the husbands whom she divorced received a pension on her estates, and in allusion to

this costly practice the jest ran through the *salons* of Paris, '*Elle se ruine en maris.*'

Backgammon and whist were the great resources of Mrs. Grote in her declining days. Madame du Quaire, Dr., afterwards Sir, William Smith, and Hayward frequently resorted to Savile Row to play a rubber with her, and when the latter came, he never failed to lecture someone, antagonist or partner. When Nassau Senior was confined to his house in 1849, Mrs. Grote insisted on teaching him whist. 'He always would arrange his suits in his different fingers for the edification of the company. There was not much play, but all the more merriment; and when towards the end of each game he exclaimed, "*What are trumps?*" the room rang with our shouts of laughter' (Mrs. Simpson in *New Review*, April, 1893, p. 477).

The ladies who endeavoured to inculcate in the minds of the members of their sex the duty of learning the game of whist, in order by their presence to soften man's asperities of speech, are not without opportunity for this display of feminine charity and goodwill. The task which they have set before themselves is one worthy of their attempt, although the difficulties of its accomplishment may exceed even their powers of example and precept. They will find perchance that the restraint put upon men's tongues by their presence only makes them break out with greater fierceness on the next occasion when ladies are absent from the table.

Sometimes, indeed, even their presence will not avail to restrain the rougher sex within befitting limits of language. The story of the Scotch judge who apologized to his feminine partner, whom he had damned for bad play, with the naïve remark that he was under the delusion that he was playing with his wife, ranks as one of the traditional jests of this century. A pleasing specimen of irritation which broke from the lips of a doctor in Suffolk is set out by Mr. Groome in the pages of *Blackwood's Magazine* for March, 1891. This disciple of Galen was playing whist one evening with an elderly spinster. She trumped his best card, an act by a weak partner which often upsets the best-devised plans of a Clay or a Cavendish, and at the end of the hand the doctor asked the reason why. The lady's soft reply did not succeed in turning away the wrath of the infuriated questioner. 'Oh, Dr. Belman, I judged it judicious!' was her smiling answer. His fury burst all bounds. He thundered out, in ever-increasing harshness of tone, 'Judicious! Judicious!! Judicious!!! You old fool!' The lady never played again.

An instance of this blind fury of man has floated down the traditions of a country town in the West for seventy years. There was resident in that town about 1825 a Lieutenant-General of the Royal Marines, who one evening when playing whist showed his partner, Mrs. Ellis, that he wished her to return his lead of trumps. She did not, and

when the trick which she led was lost, he threw his cards in her face, saying, in his wild rage, 'If you are not going to lead trumps, the game is lost!' The lady made no reply, but, exposing her hand, showed that it did not contain any card in the trump suit. The General was so terrified at his conduct that he vowed not to touch a card for twelve months. The lady was, however, of a forgiving disposition; the rest of the set liked the old General's play, in spite of his faults of manner, and in a few weeks, at the particular request of the injured dame, he forgot his vow and resumed his play.

Poor James Kenney was once terribly upset by the indiscreet conduct of his wife. He was playing whist with Planché and some others, when Mrs. Kenney and three or four other ladies burst suddenly into the room, all of them in fits of laughter. The incident so startled Kenny, a very nervous man, that he let drop some of his cards, and exclaimed, 'Is—heaven broke loose?' (Planché's 'Recollections,' i. 126).

The card-player that fails to restrain himself from such an explosion of blind fury soon repents of his rage. The excesses of his conduct are soon as apparent to him as to the rest of the company, and if he is inherently an English gentleman—and, happily for society, it may be said that the offender is in most cases a man of courteous disposition by nature—he at once seeks for an opportunity of making amends for his rudeness. One of the best

instances of the *amende honorable* may be found buried in the pages of the 'Dictionary of National Biography.' The example is worthy of imitation by all bad-tempered players at whist. It is written for our adoption, and should ever be kept in mind. Alexander Henry Haliward, a famous physician and politician at Belfast for nearly half a century, was noted for three qualities: the possession of a library rich in classical authors, sympathy with the volunteer conventions which his friend Lord Charlemont presided over, and an insatiable love of cards. The very night that was his last he played out his rubber, and then remarked in mournful tones, 'Now the game is finished, and the last act near a close.' When he was making his will, the memory of the past rose before him. He thought of the angry words which he had thrown at his wife, but his regret for his intemperance of language was dashed by the feeling that his admonitions had been thrown away. He left his wife a legacy of £100 'by way of atonement for the many unmerciful scolds I have thrown away upon her at the whist-table.' Nor was this legacy all. It was followed by the gift of a further sum of £500, the expression of his gratitude 'for her never having given on any other occasion from her early youth till this hour any just cause to rebuke or complain of her.' Then followed a third testamentary gift. He left his long-suffering wife a further sum of £100 in recognition of her goodness in amusing him with 'a game of picket'

when his eyesight had decayed. The doctor had often sinned, but, at all events, he was not unconscious of his fault, and he endeavoured to leave behind him some compensation for the wrongs he had committed. If husbands must offend against their wives in this way, let us hope that they will follow the irritable old doctor of Belfast in the last disposition of their moneys.

If husbands are to cease from bad words, wives on their part must abandon their bad play. There must be reciprocity of feeling, a system of give and take, and the proverbial fault of the Dutch must be driven far away. Perhaps some day there will be schools of whist for ladies in the old country as in the Far West of America. The idea is not new. A school for the instruction of young ladies in whist was proposed in the 'Connoisseur' of Colman and Thornton so far back as March 20, 1755. It would teach them 'the various branches of lurching, renouncing, finessing, winning the ten-ace, and getting the odd trick,' and would expel from their minds their love of 'Whitechapel play.'

In the dearth of occupations for women this suggestion should be kept in view. A few years ago news came to our shores from the Far West, and was wafted by the evening and illustrated papers of London throughout our land, that three ladies lived in America who found an income for themselves in teaching to their sex the mysteries of whist. In that favoured land events move quickly, and now at

least a dozen ladies are engaged in that pleasing occupation. The city of Milwaukee holds a proud position in the annals of American whist. It contains two whist clubs, one male and one female, and their members can hold their own against all competitors. Miss Kate Irwin Wheelock, of that city, was one of the first three preceptresses of the game, and after she had been engaged in that profession for two years, the names of 193 pupils were inscribed on her books. Her energies were not exhausted. She sighed for fresh worlds to explore and conquer. One was found in Chicago, where she opened her classes on two days in each week, and afterwards made it her fixed place of abode. Miss Wheelock's rival for pre-eminence in this pursuit is Miss Gardiner, of Boston.

Will the effect of this scientific training be to endow the younger ladies with as much and as long-lived enthusiasm for the game as is possessed by the members of their sex possessing an older growth? With many of the ancient dames born into this world in the earlier years of the present century whist has been a life-long charm spread over an existence of more than eighty years. The most remarkable instance on record is that given in the 'Reminiscences of C. W. Cope, the Royal Academician,' p. 165, and it relates to a family named Green, dwelling in South Shields. Two of the daughters were alive in 1890, and 'were very keen whist-players,' and the other members of the quartette

were two of their girl-contemporaries, their united ages amounting to 342. The oldest of the four, Miss Green, had lived for ninety-three years. The second in age had reached to eighty. Such success in overcoming the attacks of time and preserving the enthusiasm of youth are worthy of imitation among the younger sisters in their sex. May their example never be without followers!

CHAPTER VII.

CELEBRATED WHIST-PARTIES.

Fifty years ago whist-parties in private houses were much more common than they are now. The great majority of people still lived in towns, in the good old houses which their parents had inhabited before them, and numerous opportunities of social meeting were found by the residents in Bloomsbury or Bayswater. The fatal facilities for travelling which the railway companies have invented had not yet come into existence, and the middle class had not begun to dwell in the dull and prim respectability of the suburbs. The last trains are the destroyers of delights, the separators of companions. No sooner has a man sat down to an evening rubber at Surbiton or Chislehurst, than the screech of the railway whistle is heard: the game is interrupted, and he is whisked back to his own home, some miles distant. Clubs, too, were only just starting into life. They did not cover the whole of the West End of London, and their branches had not extended into every section of society. Nor, indeed,

was a club to be found in every small centre of local life in the provinces. Such establishments bring men together at fixed places of resort and at definite hours of the day, but they tend to destroy the social charm of the domestic circle. From the weekly meetings of a few friends of kindred tastes and equal merits, a great charm spread through many houses. There is something very attractive in the chronicle of the whist-parties of old. There was no ostentation or display, no desire to outshine a neighbour by an ampler spread of wines and luxuries. Simplicity—a stern simplicity of entertainment—marked all such combinations. Their cost was within the reach of all, and they were enjoyed by all who received an invitation to attend them.

Many pleasant glimpses of such parties are revealed to us in the anecdotes retailed in the vivacious pages of 'Jupiter' Carlyle's autobiography. Social life among Scotchmen shone with bright effulgence throughout the latter half of the last century. The wealth of the community was not great, and its life was usually marked by healthy moderation ; but a spirit of clanship animated all classes, and cordial geniality prevailed everywhere. Supper-parties were frequent, and they were often preceded by a rubber or two at whist. Perhaps the most pleasant of all gatherings were those given by Archibald, the third Duke of Argyle, at Inverary or in London. At Inverary dinner was served at

two, and about fifteen or sixteen sat down to it every day. When the clock struck half-past four —by which time the ladies had retired, and he had drunk his bottle of claret—his Grace settled himself to slumber 'in an easy-chair set hard by the fireplace.' The guests then 'pushed about the bottle' until six, when the slumberer awoke and called for his tea, which he made for himself at a separate table. When this restorative was drunk, he played 'two rubbers at sixpenny whist, and in the true spirit of gallantry, always insisted upon some of the ladies sitting down at the table. At the Duke's evening parties the guests always assembled at seven, and the evening began with tea and coffee. Then followed some parties of sixpenny whist—for he never allowed higher points, and they were high enough for most of the cultivated men that met at his table. About nine 'there was a sideboard of cold victuals and wine, to which everybody resorted in his turn.' High drinking was the exception, and only prevailed when some of his favourite young men dropped in, when the old man 'would rouse himself, call for burgundy and champagne, and prolong the feast to a late hour. In general, the company parted at eleven.' In after-years the mind of Carlyle reverted to these festive hours, and the picture conjured up from the past was very pleasant. His conclusion was 'that there could not be a more rational way of passing the evening.'

The members who belonged to the illustrious whist-parties of the past have long since gone over to the majority. Nothing now remains of these *noctes cœnæque Deum* save the remembrance, but there is a happiness in gathering together the names of those who joined in these delightful groups. Few men have been better informed in the gossip of the last century than the antiquary Smith, who described the associations with which the streets of London are invested, but put all his heart into the delineation of the foibles of Nollekens. He expected to have received a considerable legacy from the miserly old sculptor, and when disappointed of his expectations, took his revenge out in a biography—nothing extenuating, but setting down much in malice. Smith tells us, on the authority of Stacie, who was connected with the Bedford Arms in Covent Garden for more than half a century, of the illustrious visitors of the parlour at the hostelry during that period. In that room there was held 'a gossiping shilling rubber club'; and, according to the host's authority, there joined in the game 'John and Henry Fielding, Hogarth, Churchill, Lloyd, and Oliver Goldsmith' —about the most diversified company of wits that ever met together. It is one of the axioms of life that one wit does not long endure the society of another wit—'the first lion thinks the next a bore.' These gatherings were no exception to the rule, for at one of them 'Churchill quarrelled with

Hogarth, and used very insulting language towards him.'

In spite of the exciting contests of political parties in the second decade under George III., rival leaders often met together in friendly antagonism at the whist-table, and the combinations of combatants frequently afforded much amusement to the by-standers. One of the liveliest letter-writers at this period was that animated lady, Mrs. Harris, wife of the author of 'Hermes,' and mother of the first Earl of Malmesbury. Writing to that son in 1776, she gives him some details on a ball at Lady North's which she had attended. The sitters at one of the card-tables struck her fancy immensely. The Premier himself, Lord North, and his colleague in the Ministry, Lord Suffolk, the pompous young peer whom the first Pitt denounced with such vehemence, were on one side. They were confronted by Sir Grey Cooper, who entered upon public life as a follower of Lord Rockingham, and William Eden, better known to this generation as the first Lord Auckland. The members of the Upper House triumphed over their opponents, and the witty lady, with a sharp touch of cynicism expressive of her doubt in the genuineness of the contest, adds, 'just as the Archbishop used to win when he played against his chaplains.'

While his energies lasted, Horace Walpole took a keen interest in the struggles between the Whigs and the Tories, more especially when the fortunes of

his cousin Conway hung in the balance. After his fashion, Walpole was a whist-player, though he affected to despise the game, and called it and the novels of Richardson 'the two dullest things we have.' What an odd quartet sat down to the card-table at Lady Lucan's that December night in 1781! There were two women, Lady Bute and the 'Archbishopess of Canterbury,' and two gentlemen, Gibbon and Horace himself—the partners being Lady Bute and Walpole against Gibbon and the ecclesiastical dame from Lambeth Palace. This gathering took place five years after the publication of the first volume of the 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' and the assembling together at the same table of four persons of such different opinions in politics and religion shows very clearly the toleration allowed at that age in points of theological controversy.

A critic in the *Westminster Review* in July, 1863, points the moral very clearly. He draws attention to the boast of the writers of his own day on the spread of toleration, and asks whether such an increase had really taken place. The English world was, in 1863, stirred to its lowest depths by the publication of Bishop Colenso's critical analyses of the books of the Pentateuch, and the excitement seething among all classes supplied him with an apt illustration for his incredulity. 'What would the *Record* and Exeter Hall,' he triumphantly asks, 'say were they to learn that Bishop Colenso and

the Archbishopess of York had been partners at whist?'

Horace Walpole's life has not found many friends in this century, but one incident to his credit is duly chronicled, and may be safely accepted as authentic. He saved his old friend, the amiable Lady Suffolk, from a *mauvais quart d'heure*. This genial old lady, the mistress of George II., was placed at the same whist-table with Lady Yarmouth, another mistress of the same monarch, for whom, indeed, she had been discarded. Horace grasped the horrors of the situation at once, realized that poor Lady Suffolk was 'ready to sink,' and, with unusual kindness, took her cards from her, with the remark: 'I know your ladyship hates whist, and I will play instead of you.'

Another whist-party in high life is chronicled in his letters on London society from day to day. The seventh son of the first Earl of Scarborough was popularly known to his associates as 'Jemmy Lumley.' A senator during two Parliaments, and the holder of two snug offices—one about the Court itself, and the other about the Prince's establishment at Leicester House—his education was below even that of his fellows. In June, 1745, he gave a party and, with the usual perversity of mankind, wrote all the cards of invitation himself, and 'everyone of them was to desire *he's* company and *she's* company, with other pieces of curious orthography.' His love of company continued without abatement, for in

May, 1760, a whist-party assembled at his house. The combatants, besides the accomplished Jemmy were 'Lady Southwell, that curtseys like a bear'—probably Frances Lucia Southwell, daughter of the first Viscount Southwell—'Mrs. Prijean and a Mrs. Mackenzy.' The game sped on from hour to hour through the long night. It began at six in the evening, and lasted until twelve in the next day; 'Jemmy never winning one rubber, and rising a loser of two thousand pounds.' His suspicions were roused, and he fancied himself cheated, but he did not harbour any suspicions of the 'bear.' On the contrary, 'a day or two afterwards he promised a dinner at Hampstead to Lucy and her virtuous sister.' As he proceeded to the party, someone warned him of a surprise that awaited him, but he was not daunted. In the garden of the inn 'he found the gentle conqueress, Mrs. Mackenzy,' who, after a pleasant interchange of friendly compliments, asked him 'if he did not intend to pay her.' Jemmy's defiant answer rang out: '*No, indeed I shan't; your servant, your servant!*' '*Shan't you!*' said the fair virago, and without a moment's delay she pulled a horsewhip from beneath her hoop, and belaboured him with such vehemence that he cried 'Murder!' with all the voice he could command. In rushed his servants, who rescued him from the ferocious Scotchwoman and carried him back to town. The Southwells heard the fray, and, as the giver of the feast was not there to

pay for the banquet, hastened, dinnerless, back to London. All that poor Jemmy could do was to put his truculent assailant in the Crown Office. The scandal soon spread through every Mayfair drawing-room, while Walpole and Gray between them scattered the news all over the country.

Chambers, the architect, gathered around him in his house at Berners Street—now familiar to many of us as the home of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, with a magnificent library of books on medicine and surgery—the most illustrious characters of his time in art and literature. One night there sat at the whist-table Lady Chambers, Baretti, Goldsmith, and Sir William Chambers himself. The sullen Italian was an adept in the game, but Goldsmith, who differed from him in character, was also unlike him in the technical knowledge of whist. At a critical moment in the play the attention of the sympathetic poet was distracted from his game. He threw his cards upon the table, and flew down the staircase into the street. The notes of a strolling woman-singer in the thoroughfare had revealed to his mind the extremity of her anguish, and, without a thought of his companions, he had rushed out from their company to relieve her distress.

To the whist-gatherings at Cambridge in which Gunning and Babbage took part reference has already been made. The latter of the two carried his love of the game from the University into the more varied circles of London life, and acquired

further fame in that large sphere. A fresh proof of this is supplied by Mrs. Andrew Crosse, widow of the electrician, in her pleasant and happily-titled volumes of 'Red-letter Days.' Sir Andrew Ramsay was walking leisurely adown the sunny dip of Piccadilly, when he met Fitton, the geologist. They were both of them distinguished men of science, with a turn for pleasure in its higher form. Fitton kept open house for scientific men, smoothed by his hints the paths of many of his contemporaries towards a knowledge of practical geology, and on more than one occasion showed a sturdy and praiseworthy independence of disposition. They agreed to see Babbage and persuade him to dine with them. This was safely arranged, and on their way to the Athenæum they ran against Robert Brown, the botanist. The party was now complete. They were all men of deep learning, but not a Dry-as-dust among the four. The conversation at dinner was original and amusing. They sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Whist reigned supreme until long after midnight, and Babbage was the king of the combatants. He, says Mrs. Crosse, was 'a first-rate player.'

A quartet of very opposite tastes, but still a quartet not without distinction in life, assembled in London in 1805. William Gardiner, a man of business in Leicester, with much taste in music and much love of society, in which his inexhaustible energy never failed, has chronicled the party for us

in 'Music and Friends.' He himself had 'little pretensions' to join in the game, but a fourth was wanted, and, with his usual good nature, he consented to complete the set. Barry O'Meara, still known to fame as the beloved physician of the caged warrior at St. Helena, was his partner, and his good nature enabled his inexperienced colleague to play at his ease. 'The two others were as opposite characters as could be well coupled together.' One of them was Alderman Waithman, the City reformer, whose shawl shop stood at the corner of Fleet Street and Bridge Street, opposite to the obelisk which was erected in his honour in 1833. The other was Sir Lumley Skeffington, a dandy of the dandies familiar among the saunterers of Bond Street in the earlier years of the Regency, and then known as the author of a 'grand legendary melodrama,' with the taking title of the 'Sleeping Beauty.' His plays brought him under the lash of Byron; his foppery carried him within the rules of the King's Bench. The grave Alderman, sedate, if not vain, sat dallying amid the intervals of play with his golden chain, and 'never spoke but some weighty maxim fell from him.' On the other side of the table there was seated the fashionable Sir Lumley, a man without a rival for frivolity and ease. 'It was entertaining,' says the genial Gardiner, 'to see how they eyed each other.'

A flavour of Liberalism in politics surrounds most of the characters in this set of whist-players. The

adherents of Whiggism in the upper classes were but few; those of them in the House of Commons pleasantly spoke of their numbers as sufficient to fill a hackney-coach, but among them were some mighty card-players. Travel to Woburn and join the illustrious company of politicians that have accepted the Duke of Bedford's invitation to spend a few days in his magnificent abbey. There you can see Fox, Lord Robert Spencer, Sir Philip Francis, a confirmed attendant at the card-table, and Lord Howick. They dined at four, and that gave them a good long evening. After coffee the guests strolled in the gardens, and then they met, with the exception of Howick, who fell short of their standard of play, at whist, 'a party of good players, in a room which opens into the library.'

Read the letters written by Charles Sumner to his correspondents in America, and life as passed by the visitors to Lord Fitzwilliam's stately mansion in the country is depicted for your entertainment. Its conservatories and hot-houses are contrasted with those of New York, and to the disadvantage of the Transatlantic rivals. Its aviary contains more strange birds than are to be found in any collection in America. The manners of the young men filled our visitor with surprise. Their opinions are always supported by the offer of a bet, and at cards their disposition always ran to making 'the sum played for high.' Sumner had noted the universal rule in England of playing for money,

limited 'among sober persons' to the merest trifle, such 'as sixpence a point—a term,' he adds, 'which I do not understand, though I have gained several points, as I have been told.' One evening Lord Fitzwilliam was his partner, and their joint winnings came to a pound, 'which was duly paid and received.' On another occasion two peers, Scarborough and De Mauley, and a clergyman made up the set. Sumner again won, and the parson paid him five shillings. All this was very distasteful to him. Cards, 'in their best estate,' were not objects of passionate devotion to him, and when allied to gaming they became unlovely in his eyes. Still, to make a set he had taken his seat at the table, and had silently acquiesced in the received usage. One result of this practice of playing for money puzzled Sumner very much. In America 'man and wife never are partners' at the game of whist, but in England, as he had heard Lord Fitzwilliam observe, they always played together as partners. The explanation was that 'otherwise they would gain nothing; it would do a man no good to win from his wife.' But Lord Fitzwilliam, as he hastened to add, is a person 'of the greatest purity of character and religious feeling.'

The statement of Sumner that in England husband and wife always played together as partners must be received with credulity. The custom at the present day is certainly quite different; they are generally, and for reasons

obvious, though not financial, opposed to one another. The practice is at times even widened. The late Lord Sefton and his father were both fond of play, 'but they would not play in the presence of each other' (Grantley Berkeley, 'Life and Recollections,' ii. 95). Nor, indeed, was the present 'Cavendish' fond of playing at his father's card-table.

Mrs. Grote's 'Personal Life' of the husband to whom in her odd way she was so attached chronicles an evening at Chevening, the Kentish home of the Stanhopes. The hours after dinner were spent at whist. One set of players seated at a card-table in the drawing-room consisted of Lord Stanhope, Dr., afterwards Sir, William Smith, Lady Stanhope, and Mrs. Grote, whose love of cards induced her to form whist-parties at her own house. After awhile Dr. Smith drew the attention of Mrs. Grote to another corner of the room. When she turned her eyes in the proper direction, she beheld the Dean of St. Paul's, the historian of Greece, and the 'erudite scholar Sir George C. Lewis,' with Mrs. Reeve as the fourth player, 'all intently occupied in the same way as ourselves. It was indeed a very amusing spectacle.'

A group of Conservative politicians assembled at an entertainment in a ducal mansion in London. The three best-known members of the party were the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, and Croker. The Duke and the Leader of the House of Commons were seated at whist at the same table.

A short distance from them at another table was Croker, engaged in the process of initiation in the rudiments of écarté. Peel turned to one of the friends, always ready to execute his behests, with the words, 'Go and ask him if he ever learned the game before.' The obsequious satellite returned with the answer, 'Never, upon my soul.' Peel knew his man well. They had not been associated in public life for so many years without his having acquired a precise knowledge of his ways. 'Well,' was the remark, 'I'll bet that in *twenty* minutes by my watch Croker tells his teacher that he does not know how to play.' They waited and listened, but they had not long to wait for the fulfilment of the prophecy. In *five* minutes there dropped from Croker's lips the words, 'Well, do you know, I should not have thought *that* the best way of playing.' It was received, says Milnes Gaskell, the narrator, with a roar of laughter.

Croker had neither the feelings nor the aptitude for games of skill. He once consulted Matthew Baillie, the physician, how he could best recover from the effects of overwork, and received the advice to play at cards in the evening. That mode of relaxation—such was the physician's prophecy—would allay the anxiety created by the business of the day, and would give rest to the mind. Like many another patient, Croker paid for the advice, but did not follow the prescription.

The most famous of all whist-parties are those

in which Charles Lamb used to take part. Around that lovable character clusters a host of pleasant associations. His friends adopted every means of dissipating the sadness that clung to his life, and the diversions that he loved best were books and whist. Godwin was much attached to Elia, and would occasionally invite him to a rubber at his house; but the entertainments of the bookseller and novelist had the drawback—a serious drawback for one of the guests—that they did not always end soberly. Admiral Burney's friends used to assemble weekly at his house in James Street, Buckingham Gate, a convenient place of resort, as one of the guests and whist-players—Edmund Ayrton, musician and master of the children of the Chapel Royal—lived in an adjoining house in the same street, and could bring a son with him to complete the four. The Admiral, 'a fine noble creature, gentle with a rough exterior,' found his chief happiness in whist. Charles Lamb was a constant attendant, 'the chief ornament' of the party. Hazlitt used to come, until in his blunt way he roused the antipathy of his host 'by severe criticisms on the works of his sister, Madame d'Arblay.'

Another frequenter of these weekly symposia was Rickman, clerk-assistant at the table of the House of Commons, and Southey's friend, an official with a turn for compiling statistics, who played whist and regulated the proceedings at Westminster with

equal solemnity. In 1830 Lamb despatched from Enfield to William Ayrton a long missive full of the recollections lingering in his mind on these parties. He thought of Phillips—'not the Colonel,' as he parenthetically remarked. The Colonel was Molesworth Phillips, an officer in the Marines, who accompanied Cook on his last voyage. He used to attend the Admiral's reunions; but perhaps the chief object of his coming was to see Susan Burney, who became his first wife. At all events, the friend whose image came to mind was Edward Phillips, the Speaker's secretary, and Lamb's fancy depicted him 'with his few hairs bristling up at the charge of a revoke which he declares impossible.' The next to rise before his eyes was the Admiral himself, with his 'significant nod over the right shoulder,' and he was partnered, as in duty bound, by his wife, with her 'determined questioning of the score after the game was absolutely gone to the devil.' Then Lamb thought of the food that was provided for the refreshment of their bodies—'the plain, but hospitable, cold boiled beef suppers at the sideboard.' Such was their simple fare, and such were the 'fancies, redolent of middle age and strengthful spirits, which come across us ever and anon in this vale of deliberate senectitude, ycleped Enfield.'

Lamb's Wednesdays were 'a new institution' in 1806, when he was living in Mitre Court Buildings. They began with 'cribbage and pipes,' and joyfulness reigned supreme throughout the long evening.

In March, 1809, he wrote to the exiled Manning from 34, Southampton Buildings, his new place of abode, that he held his levée on Wednesdays. 'The Captain, Martin, Phillips (not the Sheriff)'—the Sheriff was a third Phillips, the restless politician, Sir Richard Phillips—'Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses, smokes.' Next May Lamb migrated to 4, Inner Temple Lane, and carried 'Martin and the card-boys,' as he affectionately called his friends, with him to his new rooms. They still assembled on Wednesdays, and the gatherings were 'open parties,' as the expression ran, when his friends visited him without any special invitation. The furniture was old and worn, but it was endeared by a long line of memories. A set of Hogarths, admirably preserved in narrow black frames, hung on the walls. Everyone knows the perfect picture of a whist-player given to us in the person of Sarah Battle; and from Lamb's own opinions, and the habits of those around him at these festive gatherings, her character must have been painted. The card-tables were spread for the guests, and Lamb received them with the heartiest welcome that man could give. 'On the corner of the table was a snuff-box, and the game was enlivened by sundry brief ejaculations and pungent questions which kept alive the wits of the party present. It was not *silent whist*.'

Talfourd, who not infrequently joined the company, has described the habits of the companions with whom he associated. The host himself sat at the whist-table 'with a sort of Quaker primness,' and Godwin, who regarded his hand 'with a philosophic, but not a careless eye,' played his accustomed and 'quiet' rubber as his partner. Burney, the Captain or Admiral, whose increasing years were hardly perceptible to his friends, through the ever-youthfulness of his spirits, sat between them; and Crabb Robinson, delighted at the association with so capable a player, takes the fourth place at the table. At another of the tables the 'broad, burly, jovial bulk' of John Lamb confronts the 'stately but courteous' Alsager (who was for nearly a generation connected with the *Times* as a writer on finance and music); while Phillips—the Phillips of 'the few hairs'—watched his partner, Martin Burney, as he distributed the cards. The other guests, some of whom revelled in these weekly rubbers, were Leigh Hunt, Basil Montagu, George Dyer, Hazlitt, Kenny, Ayrton, Barron Field, Payne Collier, and many others, most of whom still retain a niche in the world's memory. As the evening proceeded, Becky, the willing servant, laid a cloth on the sideboard, and spread on it the cold joints of lamb or boiled beef. Piles of smoking potatoes were eagerly consumed, and a vast jug of London porter was often replenished. The night

sped away, and as 'the severities of whist relaxed, the light of conversation thickened.'

The Burneys occupied a permanent place in Elia's affections. When the old man died in November, 1821, less than a month from the day that carried off Lamb's brother, Charles wrote a sad letter to Wordsworth in the Lakes on the deadness to everything which had come over him. 'There's Captain Burney gone! What fun has whist now? What matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you?' It was at one of these parties that Lamb is usually credited with having remarked to Martin Burney: 'If dirt were trumps, what a hand you would have!' If the assertion of W. Carew Hazlitt can be accepted, the parentage of this joke has been wrongly assigned, and an injustice has been done to the memory of some unprofessional jester. 'It was made by a gentleman who never uttered a second witticism in the whole course of his life, and who thought it a little hard to be robbed of this unique achievement.'

A good story is told of the fretful Hazlitt at one of these meetings. In one of the intervals of the game he engaged in an animated discussion with John Lamb on the exciting question whether 'Holbein's colouring was as good as that of Vandyke.' Hazlitt asserted that it was not, and Lamb strenuously maintained the contrary opinion. Their tempers rose, hot words were hurled to and fro, until in their frenzy they upset the card-table, and

seized each other by the throat. A fierce struggle ensued, and in the fray Hazlitt got a black eye. The two combatants were with difficulty parted; and when Talfourd expressed his sympathy with the unfortunate owner of the discoloured eye, Hazlitt returned his kindly expressions with the answer: 'You need not trouble yourself, sir. I do not mind a blow. Nothing affects me but an abstract idea' (F. W. Haydon, 'Correspondence and Table-talk of B. R. Haydon,' ii. 339).

The parents of Camilla Toulmin were members of a whist-club holding its meetings in the house in Berners Street which once belonged to Opie, but was afterwards purchased and occupied by James Lonsdale, the portrait-painter. One of the leading members was Dr. Clutterbuck, a distinguished lecturer on medicine. Dinner was then at half-past four, and play began at seven. When so engaged one evening, the street resounded with the cries of, 'Great victory! Buonaparte defeated!' The gentlemen threw down their cards, and rushed into the street to buy copies of the paper at any price. Some of the medical men at once hastened to Brussels to minister to the wounded, and the ladies withdrew to make lint ('Landmarks of a Literary Life,' pp. 4, 5).

James Russell Lowell lived for some time in England, and liked its people, among whom there were many of his attached friends. He, too, was a whist-player, and while a resident at Cambridge,

Massachusetts, often repaired to the house of Carter, secretary to Prescott, the historian, to join a small set of interesting Americans who indulged in the same pursuit. John Bartlett, well known on this side of the Atlantic as the compiler of the book of 'Familiar Quotations,' and John Holmes, brother of the poet-professor, were two of his companions. Whist formed but one of the pleasures of the gathering. 'The new books or old ones, magazines, pictures, reminiscences and stories occupied the available intervals.' The silence of Mrs. Battle was banished far, far away. The story was told, the joke was cracked, and when the laughter subsided the voice of the professor was heard with the bland question: 'What are trumps?' These or similar whist-parties continued to flourish for several years. Indeed, so late as September, 1874, Lowell wrote to one of his correspondents in England: 'Last night was our first whist club since my return. I looked in the record, found it was John's deal, and we began as if there had been no gap.' The club had then been in existence for more than twenty-nine years, and it was a proud boast for Lowell that in that long series of years he 'had never a dispute, or even a difference, at the table.' This happy immunity from irritation can only be accounted for by the fact that the whist was subordinate to literature and art.

An artistic whist-party used to assemble at the close of 1871 in William Bell Scott's house in

Cheyne Walk, near to old Chelsea Bridge. Dante Gabriel Rossetti was the most conspicuous figure, and Boyce, Huffer, with Scott himself, would most frequently make up the quartet. The old fire which Rossetti used to display in all things still flickered, though it had lost much of its strength; but the article by Robert Buchanan in the *Contemporary Review*, on 'The Fleshly School of Poetry,' extinguished the vital spark altogether. 'At last he could not follow the game, and used to throw down his cards.' The whist-gatherings at Penkill Castle, the hospitable Scotch home in which Bell Scott passed so many holidays, are also recorded by him. One autumn the Tademas came on a visit, and Scott, with that pleasant admixture of vanity and envy which characterizes his book, records that, although Tadema had never played before, 'he soon began to lay down the law to the others, who knew the game pretty well.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEVIL'S BOOKS AND THE DEVIL'S OWN.

In all generations of the law, several of its leading members have been found night after night in the club card-room. You can rarely go into that apartment without seeing some eminent lawyer intent on the game of whist. At one table is a law lord, at another the leading figure is an Attorney-General, at a third your eyes might have beheld a Master of the Rolls, at a fourth the leading exponent of the science used to be the Chancellor of a diocese. Most of these skilled executants have played the game because they found their chief pleasure in its infinite variety, but a few stray performers may have taken to the pursuit with the object of improving their professional skill.

To many of us the figure of Sam Warren, as he strutted o'er life's stage, is even now remembered, and by many a lawyer still in practice his 'Popular Introduction to Law Studies' was used as a text-book. In this manual of instruction the student is

advised that he may make his amusement take a share in instructing his mind. Whist is picked out as one of the games calculated to aid in the formation of the skilled lawyer. It can induce, he says, and is justified in saying, 'habits of patient and vigilant attention, cautious circumspection, accurate calculation, and forecasting of consequences,' and these qualities are essential to the successful pursuit of the law. Such a diversion as whist would constitute to many minds 'the first and best step towards mental discipline.' In its practice would be found the 'efficient correctives of an erratic and volatile humour — very pleasant and valuable auxiliaries.' Whist, played for its own sake or for a trifling stake, cannot but be useful to the student, but he must be on his guard against the 'dissipating incidents and tendencies' which sometimes accompany the game. As a means of gambling it will only impede him in his onward progress.

Such were the arguments of Warren, and by him they were first adopted in a legal text-book; but the utility of whist in the formation of the ideal lawyer had occurred to another mind nearly a century previously. In an article which appeared in the *Centinel* for October 22, 1757, under the editorship of the Rev. Thomas Francklin—the paper is now forgotten, and the editor's name is only remembered through a few references to him by Boswell—it was pointed out that the 'plodding

game of whist would furnish good heads for the law.' Let us hope that the law students who adopt the advice of these learned pundits will play the game in the spirit which they recommend.

The earliest example of card-playing in the legal profession which has come down to this age was Sir John Willes, the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas under George II. He was a quick-witted lawyer, but a man notorious for open disregard to the decencies of life. Among the defects attached to his name is numbered 'greed for gaming,' and although Lord Campbell—abandoning for once his usual propensity for exaggerating the weaknesses of his predecessor—affects to disbelieve the accuracy of the censure, the tradition, unfortunately, finds corroborative support in the 'Memoirs of Lætitia Hawkins.' She asserts that Willes 'would play cards in the public rooms at watering-places,' and that at one of these places of public resort he was disconcerted by a young barrister. This indiscreet youth—for to irritate a judge before whom you may be called to plead is hardly a sign of worldly wisdom—feigned himself intoxicated, stood by the table looking over the Chief Justice's cards, and proved himself as troublesome as he could. Willes could stand it no longer, and turned sharply on the youth. With a pretence at staggering, and with a profusion of stammering, came the retort: 'Sir, I—beg pardon—but I wanted to improve in p p-playing whist, so—so—I came to

look over you ; for if—if I am not mistaken, sir, you are a judge.'

The domestic life of Lord Thurlow cannot be recommended as a model for imitation in after-life by the rising student of the law, but by the side of Willes he might pose as a paragon of virtue. The sturdy mind of Thurlow, who loved to wrestle conclusions with his fellow-man, would have revelled in the struggle of a game at whist, but the pursuit had not been followed by him in his youth, and in his old age the imperfections of his play were ever in his mind. He is said to have openly declared on one occasion that he would give half his fortune to be a good whist-player.

A famous card-player and lawyer, a judge indeed worthy of a place either with Willes or Thurlow, and, moreover, one who resembled them in not being free from censure for sundry foibles, was Sir Francis Buller. It was Lord Mansfield's wish to have been succeeded by him in his office of Chief Justice of the King's Bench, but Pitt would not hear of it, and the rumour ran that Buller's partiality, when presiding, at Bodmin in Cornwall, on the trial of a case affecting the interests of his family in an adjoining borough in that county, had inspired the future Prime Minister, then on the western circuit as a briefless barrister, with distrust in his integrity. Buller was not wanting in courage—perhaps a more pronounced term should have been used—for it was he that laid down the law that a husband could

thrash his wife with impunity, 'provided that the stick was no bigger than his thumb'; but, still, he was acknowledged by all as one of the shrewdest lawyers of his day. His manners were courteous and friendly, and he was described as 'temperate at the table'; but he was not happy, probably because he had missed the prize to which he was entitled, and this discontent led him to 'resort too frequently to whist, to divert himself from uneasy thoughts.' This partiality for play subjected him sometimes to open censure, particularly when he was on circuit. Cradock, a county gentleman with literary tastes, which brought him within the circle of Dr. Johnson's acquaintances, met him at dinner at the house of an eminent physician. Buller took formal leave of the company about midnight, 'but, lingering for awhile, he returned to the table, and we played whist for some hours afterwards.' From youth to age he was addicted to play. The stroke of death came upon him during a game of piquet, and his favourite phrase ran: 'My idea of heaven is to sit at Nisi Prius all day, and play at whist all night.'

Lord Ellenborough and Lord Erskine were both of them partial to a game at whist. When rusticating at Tunbridge Wells in the autumn of 1807, they solaced their idle hours by playing a rubber one evening with Lady Donegal and Miss Berry, the last of whom chronicled for posterity her doubt 'which of the four plays worst.' Lord Lyndhurst and Lord Wensleydale were on the same level of

incapacity in this exacting game, but the whole four of these illustrious lawyers followed the pursuit for years with undiminished eagerness. It is a fortunate dispensation of Providence that conceals from us our points of weakness. A judge's evenings on circuit are usually passed in dignified solitude, but occasionally a few of the counsel practising before him are asked to penalize themselves by sharing his stately repast. Lord Tenterden used frequently to invite the silk or stuff gownsmen to his dinners. The party was always six in number, and after the solemn process of eating and drinking was o'er, guests and host sat down to whist. They 'played two rubbers each, and sat out two.'

In devotion to whist the Scotch lawyers were not a whit behind their English brethren. They played the game with unswerving faithfulness, and they expected to find their partners of equal skill and earnestness with themselves. Woe betide these luckless mortals, be they male or female, if they failed to reach the high-water mark of judicial expectation. Kames was often mentioned as a conspicuous example of learning and vivacity on the Scotch bench, but his learning did not always commend itself to his contemporaries, and his vivacity was apt to degenerate into coarseness. He never lost an opportunity of indulging in chess or whist. The chief instance of his coarseness broke out in connection with the first of these games. Matthew Hay, with whom he used to play at chess,

and by whom he was mostly beaten, was tried before him in September, 1780, and a verdict of guilty against him was returned by the jury. Kames could not contain himself at this announcement. The memory of a hundred defeats rose before him, and he roared out in triumph: 'That's checkmate for you, Matthew!' The same fault, though in a less marked degree, cropped up at whist. His practice was to repair to the drawing-room after dinner and to listen for a time to the gossip of the day from one of his fair favourites. The card-table was then spread, and he would sit down to his nocturnal rubber, but his characteristic was well known in Edinburgh society. Kames was 'so very keen and touchy,' says John Ramsay, the chronicler of Scotland and Scotsmen, 'that it was a perfect comedy to everybody but his own partner, whose play he expected should suit his own hand.'

The language of Braxfield, another of these fiery judges, was even less restrained. In his fury he spared neither sex nor age. In two things, wine and whist, his very soul seems to have been centred. His 'love of play made him irascible beyond measure, and in his impatience for victory, and his indignation at losing,' his ferocity of expression broke all bounds. On one occasion Sir James Colquhoun had the misfortune to cut in with him, and as he was diffident in his own powers of play, and knew very well the vigour of Braxfield's speech, he made before he sat down to the table the

stipulation: 'Noo, my lord, afore oo begin, ye maun promise no to misca' me.'

The answer was prompt: 'Na, na, Jemmie, sit ye down; I promise I'll no do that.'

With this undertaking the play proceeded in its course, but before many hands had been played Braxfield, in a storm of indignation, roared out: 'Ye —— blockhead and eedit! What garr'd ye play that caird, o' a' the cairds i' the pack?'

Colquhoun could not answer this awkward question, so he fell back on the undertaking which he had received: 'Noo, my lord, did ye no promise that ye wadna misca' me?'

Little did he get by this reminder of his partner's obligation, for the angry words were hurled back: 'Naither I did, Jemmie—naither I did! I appeal to this company if I misca'd ye!' (Fergusson, 'Henry Erskine,' pp. 429, 430).

A naval chaplain—perchance the Oxford Don who, when afterwards Rector of his college, is said to have been guilty of frequent excesses in speech when presiding over the deliberations of the Fellows—justified his cursing the sailors because it was the only way that he could get them to listen to him. Braxfield at whist apologized in a simpler way. He was playing with a lady as his partner, and when she committed some breach of the laws laid down by Hoyle, he exclaimed: 'What are ye doing, ye damned auld ——!' The words had scarcely popped out of his mouth before the sense of his impropriety

rose up before him, and he made the handsome apology: 'Your pardon's begged, madam. I took ye for my ain wife.'

Hermand, one of his contemporaries, descanted eloquently on drinking as a 'virtue,' and declared, with the accustomed oath, 'that he hated a man who cared for neither claret nor whist.' Charles Hay, whom the Whigs made a judge in 1806, when he took the judicial title of Newton, was lauded by one of his panegyrists, in a strange string of good qualities, as 'famous for law, paunch, whist, claret and worth.' Another of his critics said of him that 'cards were his profession, and the law his amusement,' but none the less he was a famous lawyer, and could after a night's festivity preside on the Bench with dignity, or dictate a law-paper with conspicuous ability.

Sir David Dundas, who through indifferent health retired from a legal career after he had attained to the positions of Solicitor-General and Judge-Advocate-General, was perhaps best known to most of us through the unremitting attention which he for some years gave, as a trustee, to the affairs of the British Museum. A card anecdote, the outward proof to the world of the playful imagination with which he is credited, is narrated of him in the 'Reminiscences' of Sir Francis H. Doyle. Dundas was seated at the card-table, and his partner is described as 'a lawyer called Jacob, a man of the highest reputation in his time.' This was Edward

Jacob, Senior Wrangler in 1816, Fellow of Caius College, a Queen's Counsel and a Bencher of Lincoln's Inn, whose advancement in his profession was cut short by his early death in December, 1841. The acuteness of his intellect and his great powers of reasoning placed him in the front rank of the members of the Chancery side, and he was widely known in more extended spheres of life through his 'vast stores of information upon most subjects.' The cards 'went against Dundas with special ill luck.' This trouble he bore for some rubbers without any complaint at the ways of Providence, but the time came when his powers of endurance were exhausted. He laid down his hand with an air of sorrowful resignation, and, in a tone of the deepest pathos, uttered the mournful words: 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of See-saw.'

The legal career of Dundas was marked by a deliberate withdrawal from its active profession at a time when the highest prizes seemed to be within his grasp. No such phrase could be applied to the career of Lord Lyndhurst. His cup of success had been full even to running over. He, too, was a card-player, and in Sir Theodore Martin's life of him is the chronicle by one of his friends, himself an illustrious lawyer and a peer, of a rubber of whist at Lord Lyndhurst's house. The rubber was formed, and the two lawyers were partners. 'I,' says the chronicler, confessing some ignorance for the first

time in his life, 'assured him that to follow suit was the only rule of whist I knew.' The response of Lord Lyndhurst was: 'You are to play with me.' The rubber went on, the old man's eyes twinkled at some of the blunders, but he kept silence from bad words. Another cut, another deal, and—strange commentary on the assertion that he knew the necessity for following suit!—another revoke from the tyro. Then came a hearty peal of laughter, and the words, not unkindly, though severe: 'Your play is more amusing than that of the most famous players.'

Sir George Jessel, a man of the quickest apprehension and most retentive memory, played cards throughout the active years of his life. Towards the close of his days he became a member of the Athenæum Club, and used to play whist within its precincts, but he was long known to the habitués of many other clubs where men congregate for the purposes of social amusement. Among them were the Portland Club in Stratford Place, London, and another at Brighton, and at each of them he shared the society of Serjeant Ballantine. The result of this companionship at the card-table has led to the Master of the Rolls being placed in the pillory in the learned Serjeant's volume of 'The Old World and the New.' The conceit of Jessel—so runs the unflattering estimate—'extended to matters where undoubtedly it was not justified. He imagined himself to be a first-rate whist-player,' and this was

an estimate of his powers which certainly was not shared, continues Ballantine, by contemporary opinion at these places of card-resort. This candid friend must have incurred the Master's open censure, for he proceeds to dissect his superior in the law, and possibly his superior at the card-table, with merciless rigour. His eye ranged over the giants who displayed their matchless strength at the Portland Club, and, picking out two of the strongest men among them, he asserts that Jessel 'would not have hesitated to tell the late James Clay or Johnny Bushe what they ought to have played, any more than he would have done to snub a junior at the Bar—or, for that matter, a leader either.' This sweeping condemnation probably rests on personal dislike, for it is recorded by the biographer of Jessel in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' which 'drags its slow length along,' that 'to young and inexperienced counsel he was always very considerate.'

Benjamin, the Minister of the Southern States of America, was not one whit inferior to Jessel in acumen or in legal authority, nor did he yield to him in devotion to games of skill. When fortune, after many vicissitudes, came permanently to his lot, he built for his wife, a French lady, and for their daughter, a house in the Avenue de Jéna at Paris; but his own tastes were of the simplest character, and he preferred for himself to pass a bachelor life in London, spending his hours of leisure in the Junior Athenæum Club and sleeping

in lodgings in one of the streets off Piccadilly. Benjamin confessed to two peculiarities. He loved to bask in the sun like a lizard, and he confessed his inability to rise, as many other distinguished lawyers have done, at four or five in the morning and work before breakfast. Whether it was for work or for pleasure, he did not mind how late the hour might be at which he went to rest. Ballantine's heart softened as he thought of his brother Benjamin, and he put on record a warm tribute to his inexhaustible power of endurance. 'He would never have been taken from a good rubber of whist through any fear of not being up in time the next morning.'

Ballantine himself was one of the vast army of whist-players whose reputation among experts does not come up to their own standard of their powers. He has, indeed, been somewhat irreverently described as 'a shocking bad player.' The points which he preferred were known in those days as 'Blenheim Stakes,' and they have been defined for the uninitiated in such mysteries as 'fives and fifties, with the odds in ponies and intermediate bets to taste.' But when the chance of winning such sums of money did not fall to him, he would condescend to points of low amount. At Boulogne, in a little club in the Rue de l'Écu, he used to gamble in a heterogeneous assemblage for franc points. The result of the play afforded some amusement to a club cynic. If anyone had a run of luck and

denuded his brethren of a five-pound note, the room was deserted. The losers withdrew to economize their resources, and the fortunate winner might be seen, 'probably for the only time that season, enjoying his dinner and Lafitte at one of the best *tables d'hôte*.'

When in London Ballantine's favourite place of resort was at the Union Club. He is credited with having played, at least once, for 'six-and-thirty hours at a stretch.' At one time during this protracted sitting the Serjeant was a heavy loser. But when Monday morning arrived his remaining antagonist fell asleep over the intricacies of double dummy, and Ballantine himself, with losses now reduced to £2,000, recruited himself with a bath and went off to the Law Courts as fresh as paint. A heavy fee, probably the heaviest that ever gladdened a lawyer's heart, tempted Ballantine to India. The money was duly paid, but wherever he went the temptations of the card-table proved too strong for him. He was admitted to the hospitality of the Bombay Club, and before he left the shores of India the greater part of this noble fee of £10,000 was left within its walls (Thorpe, 'Still Life,' pp. 288, 289).

CHAPTER IX.

WARRIORS AT WHIST.

A GOOD soldier should be a good whist-player. The same qualities are required in each instance. He should be prompt to attack, but if he should require some material support in his campaign, and the resources of his partner in the contest are not sufficient to render him any active assistance, he should be skilful in retreat. He must neither lack courage nor discretion, must know how to utilize every advantage in his position, and must be able, by his wariness, to counteract the movements of his opponents. These are the demands which are made upon a soldier in his path of duty, and these are the qualities which a trained whist-player expects to find in his partner.

The names of the card-experts in the ranks of the military contain the mightiest warriors at home and abroad. Marlborough, Napoleon, Blucher, Moltke—all these are found entered in the ranks of history as skilled in the science of whist. What a catena of military authority !

Most of us have heard the pathos of Marlborough's declining days. There are few lines in poetry, short of those which have become proverbial, better known in literature than that which records how 'From Marlborough's eyes the streams of dotage flow'; but the poet has in this instance drawn heavily on his imagination for the purpose of heightening, if not of inventing, the old warrior's sorrows. His old age was not attended by dotage; it was accompanied by all the solace that his wife—'uncertain, coy, and hard to please' as she was, beyond all women, in the hours of their prosperity—could render to her sick husband in his pain and anguish. The old Duke played cards a good deal, it is related, and the chief of the games in which he indulged was whist It had hardly as yet penetrated into every fashionable mansion of England, but it asserted its sway in the palaces of the Churchills.

Few more prominent names than that of Clive are entered in the long line of ardent gamblers who figured in Anglo-Indian circles in those days, now long remote, when the conquerors marvelled at their own moderation. The phrase was that of Clive himself, and none of his compeers exceeded the rapacity of his demands. His excesses were unbared to view in the four volumes which purport to be written by Charles Caracciolo. This 'Booksellers' Compilation,' as it has been fitly called, was ostensibly the composition of a hack writer, who figured as an Italian Count. His lucubrations

under the head of 'Bon Ton,' appeared in the *Town and Country Magazine*, with sufficient success to raise its sale for a time to the very large issue, in those days, of 14,000 copies per month. At one time he dubbed himself 'The Master of the Grammar School at Arundel,' and in 1766 he produced a very indifferent history of the antiquities of that charming old town, when he pleaded for leniency of criticism on the ground that he had been educated abroad, and had lived out of England for most of his days without being conversant with the mysteries of its language. From his narrative of the career of Clive, it would seem that their intercourse had been that of master and *valet de place*, and certainly Caracciolo did not hesitate to blacken his superior's character.

Clive suffered much bodily torment, and in quest of relief he tasted the waters of Bath. Whist, says Caracciolo, had formerly been the chief diversion of this Indian nabob, but his pains had affected his mental faculties. 'His absence and inattention could not escape the observations of his partners.' They attributed their losses to his gross mistakes, pursued him with the bitterest invectives, and gave him such a disgust for their company that he abandoned its gaming-tables and sped in his chaise to London. On his arrival there, some of his friends got up a whist-party for his benefit. Clive played but two games, when the agitation of his mind became so intense that his friends abandoned his

society. His brain became more and more unhinged, and next day he put an end to his existence. This is the statement of the Italian, and the testimony of Sir Edward Strachey in *Notes and Queries* for 1889 does not conflict with it. He bears witness that Clive 'suffered pain, greater than he could bear, from an internal complaint'; but his evidence runs to the effect that the suicide occurred during an interval in a game at whist. The four whist performers who met at Clive's house in Berkeley Square consisted of the host himself, his friend and secretary, Mr. Henry Strachey, Mrs. Strachey, and Miss Patty Ducarel. During a game the master of the house rose from the table and went out of the room. The rest of the company awaited his return for some time; but he did not rejoin them, and at last Mr. Strachey said to his wife: 'You had better see where my lord is.' She complied with her husband's suggestion, and 'found him lying on the floor with his throat cut.'

Marlborough's great successor of a century later was no less insatiable in his appetite for the same game; but Napoleon's temper was not so conspicuous for sweetness, and he could not endure to be defeated. Neither in prosperity nor in exile could he bear that his plans at whist should be thwarted, but he was never happy without his game at cards in the evening. Vingt-et-un was the game which he liked best, but he was not averse to a game at whist. When Morellet was summoned to

the Tuileries in 1803, he found Napoleon and his first wife, Josephine, seated at the card-table absorbed in whist. Another story, quoted by Cavendish from the 'Diaries of a Lady of Quality,' second edition, p. 128, begins with the record 'that Napoleon played whist at Wurtemberg, but not for money, and that he played with a bad conception of the game, and without adequate attention.' The size and form of the Grand-Duke of Wurtemberg did not allow him to approach near enough to a common straight table to form one of a set, so he used to play his game of whist at one expressly constructed to admit him.

One evening, when the Queen-dowager was playing with the Emperor against her husband and his daughter (the Queen of Westphalia, the wife of Jerome), the King stopped Napoleon—who was taking up a trick that belonged to him—with the cutting words: 'Sire, on ne joue pas ici en conquerant.' These were in the palmiest days of his prosperity, when even a Metternich condescended to stoop to pick up some papers which he had accidentally dropped on the floor; but in his hours of adversity the love of cards remained with him.

The fallen Emperor's habits varied little after his abdication save that he was driven to play with less exalted personages than crowned heads, and that he showed greater irritation at failure. On his way to imprisonment at St. Helena—the solitary isle 'placed far amid the melancholy main'—he tried every

evening to dispel the memories of the past with a game at cards, usually vingt-et-un, but sometimes whist. When safely confined in his sea-girt prison, cards were again his evening's pleasure. An old naval friend of Captain Denham lived in a house a mile or two out of Jamestown, and from the captain came the narrative of the incident which Croker recounted to Peel. After dinner Napoleon adjourned to this house to play a quiet rubber. The old gentleman was unable to join in the party on account of an attack of gout, but his two daughters, the captain, and the exiled Emperor made up the set. The great man took out four napoleons for use as markers, when one of the young ladies took up one of the coins and asked him, let us hope in innocence, what the coin was. The 'polite hero' snatched it rather roughly from her, and, pointing to the impression, exclaimed, 'C'est moi.' The annoyance caused by this incident ruffled him so much that he made a misdeal. The party begged him to try again, and he did so, with the same result. His countenance then displayed the rages of convulsive fury, and his anger was not appeased until the house had been searched for old cards, which could be more easily dealt. Meantime, the unhappy Count las Cases, his only attendant, was ordered to sit down at a spare table to play the cards alone until they should run smoothly (Parker, 'Sir R. Peel,' p. 183). The coins which Napoleon used on such occasions at St. Helena are of considerable value.

A gentleman stated in *Notes and Queries* (July 11, 1868, p. 36) that he possessed a gold napoleon which had been won from the fallen Emperor at a game of whist in St. Helena.

If a devoted player was lost to the gay Paris in the person of Napoleon, a not unworthy substitute was found for a time in Blucher. He had, like his great antagonist, a noble enthusiasm for cards, and the curious sight-seekers who flocked to France after 1814 went each night, from ten to twelve, to the Salle des Étrangers—a very fine hotel, magnificently furnished—to see him play. Their wishes were always gratified—the victorious hero never failed to come. His appearance was remarkable. He seemed as if possessed with 'a hawk-like activity' for his prey; he would button his coat, a 'plain blue frock,' tightly around him, lean down with his elbows on the table, and spend the hours, regardless of the company about him, without giving a glance or a word to the assembled company, without a thought, indeed, save for his cards and their fortunes. When he lost he broke out in the oaths of his country, and as he usually lost all his money, and all that his servant, who was waiting in the ante-chamber, could supply for his master's needs, his language was of the strongest description. Among those who saw him was Sir John Malcolm, himself no ordinary gambler.

Another picture of this assiduous old veteran in gambling is given by William Jerdan in his 'Auto-

biography,' vol. i., p. 184. Not a night passed without his appearance in the saloons of the gaming-house. 'Attired in a rusty black coat and old blue trousers, with no order but the common iron cross of the soldiery on his breast, and sometimes without that, he would sit down and lose rouleau after rouleau of gold.' His only consolation was to give his moustache a vigorous twist, and try another venture. He appeared (such was the conclusion of this attentive bystander) 'to be invariably a victim, and so far France was revenged of his mortal hostility.'

A very small niche in the world's history is all that is now filled by Sir Robert Wilson, but he was a brave soldier, and a conspicuous politician among the Radicals before the Reform Bill of 1832. A lengthy 'Life' of him, largely based on an autobiography, was published by an admiring relative more than thirty years since. In it the General records that some of his associates once drew him to play whist two nights successively for high stakes, and that he was so unfortunate as to lose £250. All that he could plead in mitigation of his fault was the mysterious fact that he was impelled 'by *peculiar* circumstances, from which he could not well disengage himself, and not by any of a gamester's passion.' That, and the recollection of this being his 'first and last offence,' formed a consolation for the distressed soldier. 'The money,' he candidly adds, 'I could ill afford; but the self-

reproach for such an act of criminal folly was the severest punishment.'

Two of the best-respected names among the Anglo-Indians who have ruled in the East are commemorated in the annals of whist. They were of very diverse dispositions, but they were united in the love of cards. Sir John Malcolm is described as an adept in their use; Mountstuart Elphinstone is represented as playing a capital game at whist. He was cool and determined in act, but of a resolute modesty which nothing could shake. Malcolm, on the other hand, was boisterous, almost rollicking, in his manners, a giant standing over six feet in height, and with every inch of him showing a self-consciousness of his own importance in the world.

Most of the Generals who indulge in the game of whist are conspicuous for excellence, but every now and then there arises a military man who breaks this monotony of uniformity. A superiority in the noble art carries in its train its pleasures and its penalties alike. General de Vautré, author of a treatise on 'Le Génie de Whist,' was prominent among whist-players, but his distinction brought its pain with it. The drop of bitterness which rises from the midst of the fountain of bliss seemed to spoil the whole draught. He used bitterly to complain that more than one of his friends declined to sit down at the same card-table with him, and the reason which they gave was, 'If I am your partner I get scolded; as your adversary I lose.'

Many years ago there was floated to the shores of Albion an anecdote which indicated the existence of a General who could not be quoted as an example for our imitation at whist. Among the physicians to the third Napoleon, who was himself not to be despised as a partner at this game, was Dr. Arnal, who played his cards well, and, like most skilful performers, was pitiless to the faults of those who associated with him in his pleasure. One night he was seated at a card-table at the Tuileries with a General A——, who recked little of the finesse of the game, and threw his cards on the table as if they were mere pieces of pasteboard instead of the most refined instruments of skill that genius can devise. It was soon observed that at every blunder the doctor's annoyance increased, and that as instances of imbecility occurred he fidgeted more and more on his chair. Twenty times at least he checked any further display of his indignation by a supreme effort of abnegation from abuse. At last the General crowned the edifice of his folly with so dreadful a *brioche* that the doctor lost all patience. Looking fixedly at his partner, he hissed out the words with sufficient loudness for the whole of the company to hear, 'Yes, it is very clear that it is not very difficult to become a General!'

Moltke, the second great German leader of men, whose name is familiar in English households, a soldier superior, perchance, both in whist and war, to his illustrious predecessor Blucher, was always a great

enthusiast in the noble game. On Friday, April 24, 1891, he dined with his nephew and personal aide-de-camp, Major von Moltke. After his dinner he took a short nap, at five o'clock he called for his accustomed cup of tea, and joined in his final set of whist. In his last rubber he had especial luck, and his partner, who usually held bad cards, was equally fortunate. The old Field-Marshal was in fine spirits. 'Nun haben wie sie' (Now we have them), he said with a smile, as he played his last hand. His strength in cards in this hand was marvellous, so much so that without any aid from his partner he won the rubber with the 'Grand Schlem,' familiar to us in England as the Slam—*i.e.*, he won all the thirteen tricks. Then, turning to his nephew, who had indulged in some chaff on the old warrior's play, he made use of his favourite phrase, which is almost a proverb in Prussia on people who have been ridiculed and yet succeeded in their object, 'Was sagt er nun zu seinen säufern?' (What does he say to his drunken fellows now?). Such was the original version of the story, but it was afterwards suggested that the game was Cayenne, a German species of whist, in which the dealer can make any suit trumps.

CHAPTER X.

GAMBLERS AT WHIST.

The mass of whist-players join in the game for the sake of relaxation, and not with the expectation of pecuniary profit. The proper rule for each man's guidance is, not to play at any game for stakes which cause him anxiety. If he cannot afford to find the balance of the year against him at the points for which he is playing, he should retire into private life. Persistence in a game of skill when his mind is racked with the prospect of losing what his means will not allow him to defray without discomfort to himself or to others must inevitably end in loss. It is impossible to lay down any standard of 'points' which will suit the purses of all alike, from the Duke of Westminster to Jack Eames, the City clerk. Each man must settle the question for himself, always keeping in mind the principle that in games, as in diet, 'one man's meat is another man's poison.'

The man of small means will always have the

consolation that high play does not necessarily involve high stakes. The general standard of skill at the Baldwin Club, where the points are limited to half a crown, is as high as at any of the more expensive clubs in London. Still, it would be affectation on our part to shut our eyes to the fact that gambling has existed in all classes for several centuries past, and that the spirit is not dead at the present time, though it has been 'scotched.' In these days the losses at cards rarely reach in the upper circles of life a sum sufficient to cripple the resources of the player. Stakes are now fixed at a much smaller sum than used to be the case, and a decade passes by without the mention of any noble's name as being ruined by dice or by cards. Occasionally, indeed, there creeps into the papers in an obituary notice the name of someone who has put down or taken up at the card-table a few thousands of pounds. An instance of the death of such a player occurred in the spring of 1891. This was Lord M——, who was said to have annually cleared at the Turf Club for many years the handsome sum of £3,000. The statement did not meet with general acceptance, but a player of considerable reputation at whist, who had often crossed swords with him, asserted to me his belief in the correctness of the paragraph in the weekly journal. A detailed record of their gains or losses is kept by a few players, and the statistics which they produce on the fruits of their labours for many years are not of this tall

character, and do not awaken suspicion among their comrades.

An interesting letter from a famous card-player in the ranks of the peerage is included in the volumes of Abraham Hayward's 'Correspondence.' He had travelled to Venice with the resolution of avoiding all play (presumably because he had been surfeited at the Portland), and had gained his object. The idea of clubs and of public gaming-houses had first taken root in Venice, and its growth had extended through all the countries of Europe. In its original soil the love of gambling had withered at the roots, and little vitality remained in the branches, which had spread into other lands. Venice, 'formerly the capital of play,' had cast off all connection with it, and the spirit was as dead there as in London. Gambling in England had been destroyed through the losses which had been made at Crockford's, and through the exposure which followed on the accusation made against Lord de Ros. Lord Orford imparted to Hayward, as the result of his experience since 1840, that in the clubs on the Thames there was little higher play than sovereign points, with a bet of twenty-five pounds. 'There are about a dozen men in London who bet 25, 50, or 100 pounds.'

The legitimate conclusion is, that the professional gamester probably exists abroad in greater numbers than in England; but to this we must in fairness add that not a few notorious names in that section

of mankind can be met with in Great Britain in all generations. From the days, the 'merry' days, under Charles II., when card-playing first assumed a definite shape in England, until about the middle of this century, play for excessive stakes was rife in social life, and was accompanied in several cases by systematic fraud. Not that there were not gamblers of an earlier date, or that some do not exist even now. One of the earliest mentioned in history was Sir John Suckling. He played at cards 'rarely well,' says the chattering Aubrey, and 'did use to practise by himselfe a-bed, and there studyed the best way of managing the cards.' The result was unfortunate, but not unexpected. His sisters came 'to the Peccadillo bowling-green crying for the feare he should lose all their portions,' and in the end 'no shopkeeper would trust him for sixpence. And the reason,' says Aubrey, was that 'to-day he might by winning be worth £200 lib., the next day he might not be worth half so much, or perhaps be sometimes *minus nihilo*.'

Two instances of malpractices at cards are specified in the 'Memoirs of Gamesters,' published in 1714, by some unknown scribe called Theophilus Lucas. The name of one of those horrid examples is set out as Sir John Johnson, and according to the information given in 'Le Neve's Knights' he must have been the Alderman of the City, and goldsmith in Cheapside, who was knighted in October, 1696. The statement of the tricks practised by this cunning

artist is very specific. He was most dangerous when he condescended to play at whist, for then 'he would seldom fail of having all the four honours when he dealt, or at leastwise deal them betwixt himself and his partner.'

The name of his partner in cheating is better known, though the mode in which he excelled is not so clearly defined. It was that of Colonel Thomas Panton, and it survives to this day in the notorious Panton Street, off the Haymarket. He was the last proprietor of Piccadilly Hall, which stood at the corner of Windmill and Coventry Streets—a building and grounds which were described by Lord Clarendon in 1641 as 'a fair house for entertainment and gaming, with handsome gravel walks with shade, and where were an upper and lower bowling-green, whither very many of the nobility and gentry of the best quality resorted both for exercise and conversation.' With the profits of this establishment, and with his own practices at the card-table, he gained large sums, which he judiciously laid out in the purchase of real estate in the neighbourhood, so that his daughter married into the ranks of the peerage. Lucas is lost in admiration over the memory of this genius. Panton, in his enthusiastic words, was an 'absolute artist, either upon the square or foul play,' and he did not confine his manual dexterity to any one game. He excelled by his skill or by his cheating at all of them; but his especial favourites

were 'English Ruff and honours, Whist, French Ruff.'

One of the most notorious gamblers during the first half of the eighteenth century was Lord Mountford. Horace Walpole, no mean judge of men or women, considered him 'good-natured and agreeable, with the most compendious understanding,' but his extravagance in every detail of his life exceeded all bounds. In the first pages of the early betting-book kept at White's, sixty wagers, amounting to £5,500, are entered against his name. His landed estates were mostly in Cambridgeshire, and on his mansion at Horse Heath vast sums were expended. He lived in great extravagance, lost heavily in playing hazard at White's; but the final blow to his fortunes was the loss of no less than £1,600 a year by the deaths on the same day of the Earl of Albemarle and Lord Gage, who must have been either the lives on some leasehold property belonging to him or the payers of annuities to him. His condition was desperate, and he abandoned himself to recklessness, but, as a last resource, pressed the hypocritical old Duke of Newcastle for the governorship of Virginia or the mastership of the Royal Hounds. Both were refused, and he made preparations for death. The last evening of 1754, the last day of his life, was spent by him in playing whist at White's. He ordered a supper at the club, and sat up, absorbed in his game, until one. Lord Robert Bertie was of

the party, and drank to him a happy new year, at which tragic incident poor Lord Mountford was seen to pass his hand across his eyes, as if he were dazed. The following morning he executed his will, in the presence of his lawyer and the requisite witnesses, and asked if a will held good even if the maker of it were to commit suicide. He was answered in the affirmative; and having thereupon asked his lawyer to excuse him for a minute, stepped into an adjoining room and shot himself.

Two incidents brought the names of Vernon and Meynell into prominence at the close of the year 1767. They were both of them traffickers in politics, and both of them were conspicuous in social life. A treaty was being negotiated for the alliance of the Duke of Bedford and the 'Bloomsbury gang,' as his followers were called, with the Duke of Grafton and the satellites who paid him obedience. Vernon and Meynell were the negotiators in the Duke's interest. The former of them had been in the Guards, but he was frequently hailed by the title of 'Jockey' Vernon, for he lived at Newmarket, bred much, and was the 'oracle' of the place. His original fortune was very small, but Pigott, the historian of the Jockey Club, speaks of him as being worth £100,000. Meynell, on the other hand, a man of high fashion, wasted on the turf 'a large portion of a noble estate.' These men were publicly attacked by Brereton, a gamester, and not of the best reputation, who had been in

the army. He declared that one day, as he was betting at Newmarket on a game at whist, he had seen Vernon and Meynell, the two negotiators, who were playing at the game, cheat in concert. The bully offered to prove his words with the sword or in a court of justice, but they took no notice of him. Brereton then wrote to Vernon that, having borne the King's commission, he ought to have acted with more spirit, and demanded satisfaction; but Vernon refused to meet him. 'It was not believed that they had cheated, but their want of spirit was notorious.' The sequel of all this turmoil was that Grafton took up their cause, and, having summoned a meeting of the Jockey Club, set the names of a 'great many men of the first quality to the expulsion of Brereton, and caused their act to be printed in the public newspapers' (Walpole, 'First Ten Years of George III.' (ed. 1845), iii. 132, 133).

Lord Sandwich was another politician not unworthy of association with the members of the 'Bloomsbury' gang. Throughout his life scandal fastened on his name, though even his detractors could not deny that he threw considerable energy into his administration of the navy. Whatever he did he put his heart into it. Mirabeau, in his 'Letters written during a Residence in England,' when speaking of the gaming peers who then flourished in our land, picked him out as a Minister of State 'who passed four-and-twenty hours at a public gaming-table so absorbed in play that during

the whole time he had no sustenance but a bit of beef between two slices of toasted bread, which he ate without ever quitting the game.' The convenience of this mode of seizing a snack was quickly appreciated. The Minister's plan sped through every station of life, and at this time, wherever the English language is spoken, such a refreshment is known by its inventor's name as a 'sandwich.'

A high place on the list of gamblers, if not actual pre-eminence, is due to Major-General John Scott, of Balcomie (died 1775), who purchased that estate, and became Member of Parliament for Fifeshire. In married life he was not altogether fortunate, for his first wife, Lady Mary Hay, eldest daughter of the Earl of Erroll, ran away from him, and he was compelled to undergo the ignominy of obtaining a divorce; but in his second marriage, and in every other stage of life, he was dubbed 'a man of wonderful good luck,' and his career has been tersely summed up as that of 'a notorious gamester, who acquired numerous estates.' Someone said of him that he was like a cat: throw him as you pleased, he always fell on his feet. Another wit, who saw him and a brother gamester (General Grant) driving upon the sands at Leith Races, applied to them with scorching irony the lines from Prior, 'An honest but a simple pair.' Lord C., in a single night's sitting, lost to him no less than £33,000, and after that severe lesson took the warning to heart, and always left off when he had

lost £100 at a sitting. Scott is said to have won £200,000 in all at White's Club in St. James's Street, 'and at the time of his death was considered the wealthiest commoner in Scotland.'

His house at Edinburgh was in Drummond Place, on the east side of the present gardens, and before the neighbourhood was built upon the villa was reached by a fine avenue, and the grounds seemed to cover all the land between York Place and Canonmills. It was called Belle Vue, and consisted of two stories only. It was afterwards used as the Customs House, and in July, 1825, was converted into the Excise Office. Sir Lawrence Dundas, who had finished his beautiful mansion in St. Andrew's Square, at a gambling bout with the General lost all his cash, and then staked his new house against the sum of £30,000. This, too, he lost, but it was afterwards arranged that he should retain his house, and build another for the General to suit his taste. From this sprung the villa of Belle Vue (Chambers's 'Walks in Edinburgh,' pp. 218, 219).

While living there Scott played at Stapleton's tavern, where one night a messenger brought him the news that he was blessed with a daughter. He turned to the company with the words: 'You see, gentlemen, that I must be under the necessity of doubling my stakes, in order to make a fortune for this girl.' Thereupon he played rather deeper than usual, with the result that in a few hours' play he was a loser of £8,000. The company began to

chaff him on this discomfiture; but the General, 'who had an evenness of temper that nothing could warp, and a judgment in play superior to most,' retorted on those around him with the calm assurance that things would still turn out all right. He played on, Fortune once more smiled upon him, and at daybreak, about seven o'clock in the morning, he had recovered his losses, and was able to go home with a balance of £15,000 in his favour. Scott had three daughters; one of them became the Duchess of Portland, another married the Earl of Moray, and the third was the wife of George Canning, England's Prime Minister. For which of them he intended this provision is not known.

The General's skill in cards and his clearness of head are recognised by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter in a letter to the mother of the race of 'blue stockings,' Mrs. Montagu. 'He plays, as it is called,' a somewhat strange opening for a lady of her talent in whist, 'very fairly, but so much upon system that I have been told he drinks nothing but water, that his head may be always perfectly cool.' A boiled chicken, with toast and water, was his usual dinner, and this régime in diet was no doubt adopted for the reasons given by the learned Elizabeth. His willingness to play for small points, when the circumstances of those around him justified no other, and his kindness in discouraging his subalterns from gaming, are acknowledged by another Scot, Sir James Campbell, of Ardkinglas. 'The old General,'

he says, 'seemed to enjoy himself'—such is the cautious expression of this Northern sage—'with his officers at a rubber of sixpenny points.'

Campbell was himself no bad specimen of the 'professional player.' His nerve was beyond that of his fellows. He never lost his coolness at the gaming-table, and was thus always called a 'fortunate player.' In reading his 'Memoirs' there rise to view the traits of the practised speculator on the Stock Exchange at the present day. Each of them—the card-gambler of the last century and the jobber of stocks and shares of this age—conducts his operations on the maxim of cutting losses and letting profits run. It was so with the deliberating Campbell of Ardkinglas. He put a limit to his losses which he never exceeded, but he set no bounds to his gains. When in Dublin about 1778, he played at the Castle a good deal, and with such good fortune that at the end of the year he found himself a winner of some £2,000. At another resort of the gamblers in Ireland—at Daly's Club, which was then housed in 2 and 3, Dame Street, Dublin, but was afterwards removed to magnificently-decorated rooms on College Green—his luck was not so good, for there he left behind him a few hundreds of pounds. The application of these gains, if we can accept the statement of Campbell himself as accurate, is probably without a parallel in the history of sport. Often and often has an innocent parent been called upon to pay the losses at play or

on the turf of a spendthrift son. Never before or since has a case been known of a son helping his father in his necessities with the proceeds of his skill in cards. 'Through my success,' says Sir James Campbell, 'I was enabled to help my father, at one time with £1,700, at another with £1,000.'

Military men and Eastern officials took the first places among the gamesters under George III. Worthy colleagues of those already mentioned were 'Indian General Richard Smith and Admiral Hugh Pigot.' In the winter of 1787-88 the King's two eldest sons acquired new accomplishments. The Prince of Wales taught the Duke of York to drink, and the Duke, not to be outdone, initiated his elder brother into the expensive mysteries of hazard, quinze, whist and other games at cards. The play took place at a new club known by the name of Dover House, and situated in St. James's Street, on the site of Fenton's Hotel. Its proprietor was Weltzie, who had been house-steward to the Prince of Wales, and it was afterwards called by his name. At this institution Lord Barrymore received two black balls more than there were members in the room, a mystery which was solved by Weltzie's explanation that he had himself put in two black balls, lest the peer 'should come in and ruin my club.' It had been founded by the Prince of Wales in opposition to Brooks's, 'because Tarleton and Jack Payne, proposed by his Royal Highness, were blackballed.'

The winners of the sums which the Royal Princes dropped were the brave General and Admiral, 'who both wanted it very much.' Smith, who is pithily described as having 'carried cheeses on his head' to his father's customers, was a Major-General in the Indian army, who returned to his native country with 'loot' amounting to £150,000. He contested the two erring boroughs of Hindon and Wareham, and he was twice ejected from his seat at Hindon for bribery, with the result that he was prosecuted and convicted. His nickname in the fashionable world of London was 'Hyder Ali,' and his son, reckoned the best whist-player in his day, was appropriately called 'Tippoo.' The second Smith used to play at Brooks's, and his chief associate was an old gentleman who rejoiced in the *nom de guerre* of Neptune. This playful cognomen he derived from his association with the sea, into which he threw himself in an agony of apprehension that he was ruined. He was fished out, cast up his betting-book once more, found that he was not ruined, and played at the game of whist for the rest of his days.

Pigot, the gallant Admiral, was brother of George, the only Lord Pigot. He was Member for Penryn from 1768 to 1774, and for Bridgnorth from February, 1778, to 1784, and in March, 1782, he was created a Lord of the Admiralty. In spite of heavy losses at the gaming-table, the elder Smith, when he died on July 3, 1803, at an advanced age,

left a very large fortune. Pigot died in comparative obscurity at Bristol on December 15, 1792.

Francis, the petulant Sir Philip Francis, whom many ingenious critics have persisted in identifying with the author of the 'Letters of Junius,' was another of these inveterate gamblers. Cards dominated the whole Anglo-Indian society of Calcutta in those days, and many a crime inflicted on the unhappy natives had its origin in the losses at the gaming-table of their alien rulers. When in India, it was the habit of Francis to spend every night in this amusement, and he found plenty of coadjutors in those around him. Macrabie, who kept a diary of the social incidents at Calcutta in 1775 and 1776, records that on September 1, 1775, he saw, at a reception at Lady Anne Monson's, three whist and two chess tables. To Lady Anne he gave the highest praise for ability, to Francis he attributed general good fortune. Two months later Macrabie entered in his diary that he had been losing for a month, and that he was now 'not ten pounds gainer or loser' at cards since he had sailed from England. With this result he was profoundly dissatisfied, for he wanted money, and he adds the confession: 'I begin to love money; and, if I can get it fairly, I will have money.' Francis played as a business, and good fortune shone on his plans. Rumour, which sometimes exaggerates, went so far as to estimate his gains at whist at thirty lacs of rupees, and to debit him with a loss of £10,000 at back-

gammon. In March, 1766, an 'extraordinary stroke of fortune' had made him independent. A month later he records in his diary that he had 'won a fortune and intended to keep it.' At the close of the year the diarist entered more into detail. He then acknowledged that 'on one blessed day of the present year (1776) I had won about twenty thousand pounds at whist,' though it was then 'reduced to about twelve.' This balance he intended to keep for himself, as he had ceased to play 'but for trifles, and that only once a week.' Most of this money was won from Barwell, who, according to Henry Frederick Thompson, in his 'Intrigues of a Nabob'—no very trustworthy witness, it must be confessed—was induced to play with Francis for such large stakes in the hopes of attaching him to the side of Warren Hastings. Barwell lost to everyone. Justice Lemaitre, who at one time had been a considerable loser, recovered it all at his expense, and then 'tied up, as it is called,' and played no more. Colonel Leslie followed suit in this abstinence from the game after he had won, and we are not surprised to learn that this vexed Barwell 'a little, who is fond of play and will play for anything.'

By his gains at the card-table Francis was enabled to leave India with a moderate fortune much earlier than he could have done if he had been dependent on his savings alone. He carried his love of the game back to his native country, and indulged in it at Brooks's. That notorious ill humour which

brought down on him from Rogers the witticism that, if not Junius, he was certainly Junius Brutus, showed itself on many occasions. When engaged one evening at his club in the supreme pleasure of a game of whist, and exulting in the newly-conferred red ribbon which hung about his neck, he was quizzed about his latest toy by Roger Wilbraham, a mighty Whig and a mighty book-collector. Francis retaliated with the vulgar retort that he should like Wilbraham to get 'a halter and be damned.'

Gamblers soon attach to their company men like unto themselves, and Francis quickly became the central figure in Calcutta of a pleasant set of characters, both male and female. One of his chums was a certain Major Baggs—it was said that they were 'Irish cousins'—who arrived in Calcutta in December, 1778, on a gambling speculation, which did not turn out a success, possibly because before he could perfect his plans he was ordered out of India by the directors. It is recorded of him that on one occasion he had the amazing luck to win no less a sum than £17,000 at hazard, by throwing on—to use the language of the game—fourteen successive mains. This interesting Major might have sat for the picture of a duellist, for he had just crossed weapons with 'fighting' Fitzgerald, had been the principal in at least ten other duels, and was notorious for his skill with the sword. In his gambling exploits he cared little whether he con-

tended with king or courtier. At Spa he won £6,000 from an unknown Mr. O.; while in Paris he lived in the greatest splendour; he moved to Avignon, but he carried his love of feasting with him, for he gave 'splendid suppers' to the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, and, when they proceeded to Naples, accompanied them and obtained an introduction to the private parties in the King's palace. The King even condescended to try his luck with the gallant Major, and after some hours the monarch rose up from the table a loser of £1,500. Baggs is credited with having ruined at play no less than forty persons; and when he died, in Jermyn Street lodgings on January 1, 1792, it was announced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that his death was 'occasioned by a cold caught in the round-house, when he and many others were carried thither by Justice Hyde from the gaming-table in St. James's Street.' The same authority dwells on his 'terrible countenance,' but softens the picture with an acknowledgment that his manners and appearance were gentleman-like, and that his knowledge of literature was considerable.

Long years ago, now thirty in number, inquiry was made in the pages of *Notes and Queries* as to the names and fortunes of England's famous whist-players, and chief in their ranks was placed the name of Major Crewe. This young soldier, 'a most gentlemanly, good-natured man,' even when a subaltern in the army, made for himself a reputa-

tion in society and in the gambling-rooms. His father, the first Lord Crewe, one of the founders of Brooks's Club, died in 1829, after he had been a member of it for the unprecedented tenure of sixty-five years. His mother was the pre-eminent Whig beauty immortalized as 'True Blue and Mrs. Crewe,' a lady of such surpassing loveliness that Madame d'Arblay, with epigrammatic smartness, wrote of her 'as uglifying everything near her.'

She knew her son's weakness in yielding to the temptations of life in London, and recognised that the only chance of safety for him was in absence from town. Lord Macartney, at her earnest request, consented that the youth should go with him to China as the second attaché in his embassy, but on one condition only, that he gave a 'most solemn pledge on his honour' not to touch 'either cards, or dice, or other instruments of gambling, either on board ship or at any place where they might stop.' He gave the pledge and broke it—broke it, as it appeared, under the persuasion of an old Scotch Lieutenant, who ought to have known better. Night after night was Sir John Barrow, who tells the story in his 'Autobiography,' disturbed in his cabin during the passage home by the rattling of dice, or by what was perhaps worse, the young man's scraping on the bass-viol. To Crewe the result of the expedition was disastrous. He lost to one of the Lieutenants of the *Lion* 'some thousands of pounds, not any

part of which he could pay, and it was also said that he had compounded for an annuity of as many hundred pounds as he had lost thousands.' The youth ultimately succeeded to his father's peerage, and died a full-blown General in the army, at his château near Liége, at the close of 1835.

Another of these gaming celebrities was Quintin Craufurd, a native of Kilwinnock in Ayrshire, who came back from Manilla with the wealth of a Nabob. By his best-known maxim he anticipated the fondest wishes of the Americans, for he was accustomed to give to his friends the advice: 'Make your fortune where you like, but enjoy it at Paris;' and in that city he was well known for his hospitality and his stores of literary information. As one of the most attached friends of Marie Antoinette, he provided the carriage which the Royal Family took at Bondy, on their disastrous flight from Paris. He was classed as an *émigré*, and his pictures and statues were sold in November, 1792; but after the signing of the Peace of Amiens he returned to his beloved city and formed fresh collections of pictures, prints, and manuscripts, which were among the sights of Paris until his death in November, 1819. Throughout his life his devotion to cards never ceased. Swinburne, when in France in October, 1786, mentions that Craufurd sat up all night playing hazard at the Duke of Dorset's. Talleyrand enjoyed his company, and obtained leave for him to remain in Paris.

They were often struggling, either in partnership or in antagonism, at the whist-table.

The Duke of York, the favourite son of the third George, kept a hospitable table at Oatlands, near Weybridge, for his friends, 'and everyone did as he pleased.' Dogs were the delight of his amiable wife, whist was his. If any exception, says Raikes, could be taken to the pleasure of existence under the Duke's roof, it was 'that sometimes we had rather too much whist.' The Duke never would rise from the table so long as he could invent an excuse for another rubber. Most of his friends in town — Lords Yarmouth, Alvanley, Foley and Worcester—with whom he dined, 'without any ceremony, as a private individual,' avoided, by common consent, the enticements of a whist-table for him; but other hosts, less sure of their position with him, and consequently more ready to flatter him, were pinned to the table until the clock struck four in the morning. No wonder that, though he possessed an iron constitution, his health at last began to give way.

As a whist-player, the Duke never attained to the first place, and he was heavily handicapped by his inability to preserve an impassive countenance. His face was an index to his hand, and his great friend, Sir Thomas Stepney, used to tell a story of seeing him lose a rubber of three hundred guineas through this defect. His points were immutably fixed at twenty-five guineas, and there was, besides, a bet of fifty or a hundred guineas. The Duke was in the

middle of a rubber, and the odds were running heavily against him. On taking up his hands, his face showed such a blankness of despair that his right-hand adversary was tempted to finesse against him in direct defiance of all probability, and, by his amazing coolness, won the rubber. The Duke had an unpleasant habit for his companions of omitting to pay when he lost, but sometimes he was driven into paying. In the 'Correspondence' of Thomas Raikes is a letter, in 1820, promising that he would pay George Anson the £108 which he owed to Raikes. But more frequently he allowed the debt to remain undischarged. One evening he won three bumpers from a wealthy parvenu, who ventured to remind him that there was an outstanding score between them of some £4,000, which had long remained unliquidated. 'No, no,' was the Prince's answer to this unpleasant reminder; 'we have nothing to do with old scores here,' and the tuft-hunter paid. One of the most constant guests at the Duke's house, and a man who won much at his whist-table, was Count Montrond.

A second illustrious Duke, though not a royal one, who never could resist the attractions of a four at whist, was the fifth Duke of Devonshire. He enjoyed his life in London, and his chief happiness was his rubber at Brooks's. After the game was over — and with this Duke, as with his royal colleague, four o'clock was the limit of his play — he rioted in a hot supper. A broiled blade-bone of mutton was his delight, and it was cooked for him

at Brooks's whenever he appeared. When it was in season, a boiled mackerel preceded the mutton. The Duke of York was a Tory, and his political prejudices threatened, had he survived his elder brother, to inflict incalculable damage on the nation. Devonshire was, of course, a Whig, and among his partners in whist and in politics was Charles James Fox. Early in life, before the charms of literature had become all-absorbing, Fox's passion for cards prevailed over every other feeling. The sums which he lost were enormous; they even reduced the ample resources of the first Lord Holland.*

* The misfortunes of Fox are set out in some lines printed in *Notes and Queries*, first series, x. 123 (1854):

> At Brooks's of pigeons they say there are flocks,
> But the greatest of all is one Mr. Fox;
> If he takes up a card or rattles a box,
> Away fly the guineas of this Mr. Fox;
> O ye gamblers, your hearts must be harder than rocks
> Thus to win all the money of this Mr. Fox;
> He sits up whole nights, neither watches nor clocks
> Ever govern the movements of this Mr. Fox;
> Such irregular conduct undoubtedly shocks
> All the friends and acquaintance of this Mr. Fox;
> And they very much wish they could put on the stocks,
> And make an example of this Mr. Fox;
> Against tradesmen his door he prudently blocks,
> An aversion to duns has this Mr. Fox;
> He's a great connoisseur in coats and in frocks,
> But the tailors are losers by this Mr. Fox;
> He often goes hunting, though fat as an ox—
> I pity the horses of this Mr. Fox;
> They certainly all must be lame in the hocks,
> Such a heavy-tail'd fellow is this Mr. Fox.'

Fox was not one of those weak creatures that were ignorant of the principles of the scientific games at cards. 'On the contrary,' says Wraxall, and his testimony on this point may be accepted without demur, 'he played admirably both at whist and at piquet; with such skill, indeed, that, by the general admission of Brooks's Club, he might have won £4,000 a year at those games if he would have confined himself to them.' This restraint, alas! was what he could not put on himself. He was tempted to join in games of chance, 'particularly faro,' and with them came loss of money and reputation. Few men could be found more devoted to the Liberal principles which Fox advocated than Alderman Sawbridge, and none took higher rank as a card-player. In the clubs of St. James's Street no dissentient voice would have been found in opposition to the dictum that Sawbridge was 'indisputably the greatest proficient at the game of whist' then to be found in England. Lætitia Hawkins, to whom the world is indebted for many entertaining anecdotes on whist, supplies a remarkable instance of his powers of observation and memory. At the close of a game, when the last card was about to be led, he remarked: It is singular that the four fives should come together.' It was so. When the round was played, it appeared that each player held a five.

Another mighty name in the circles of Whiggism, and, like Sawbridge, another leader of opinion in

the Corporation of the City, was found in Harvey Christian Combe. The son of a Hampshire attorney, born at Andover in 1752, he drifted to London with the proverbial half-crown, and ended by becoming its Lord Mayor. He was a corn-merchant and a brewer, whose name has been long familiar to us in the firm of Combe, Delafield, and Co. Like Sawbridge, he was one of our leading experts in the intricacies of whist, and he is said to have adopted the practice of General Scott in 'mortifying his appetite' before joining in any important contest, so that he might obtain a firmer hold 'over his feelings and faculties.'

One of the best-known names that has ever flourished in English card centres is that of Lieutenant-Colonel Aubrey. By those outside the charmed circle in which he lived he was believed to have been the Major A—— who published a small treatise on whist, and there is no doubt that the compiler intended to propagate its sale by the assumption of this title and initial. Though he was innocent of this compilation, he was reported—such, indeed, was the gossip that one Davies, a clerical *détenu* in the Fleet prison, confided to E. H. Barker —to have written a little volume on 'Politeness, or Good Breeding,' which bore the disguise of 'Αγωγός. In the opinion of Raikes, who knew London life well, 'he was the deepest gambler and the best whist and piquet player of his day.' Incredible of belief were the sums that he would adventure, and

although the record went against him at last, his courage was often rewarded by success. Among the men of fashion who were at one time his antagonists and at another his partners are singled out the two sons of George III., Fitzpatrick, the friend of Horace Walpole, and Harvey Combe, all of whom knew what it was to be 'hard up' through gaming.

Aubrey's life was spent in various vicissitudes of fortune, in alternations of wealth and poverty. Nor was it deficient in personal danger. On his way to India as a very young man his ship took fire, and although the ocean was swarming with sharks, he managed to save his life by floating on a hencoop. He won and spent several fortunes; he spent the first of them, indeed, in the ship on his way home, and then transferred himself, without landing, to the return vessel, and went back to make another. This in its turn was lost, and he then made a third fortune at play from a five-pound note which he borrowed, and at last died in very meagre circumstances, existing on a small annuity which he had the prudence to place out of the reach of gambling. Aubrey excelled at all games, and enjoyed among his associates a deserved reputation for shrewdness and cleverness. At Graham's he lost one night the enormous sum of £35,000, whereupon he bade adieu to his comrades, and retired to a friend in Oxfordshire, to whom he narrated his troubles, and confided that after this visit he should leave the

country for at least twelve months. In a week's time he reappeared at his friend's house, and on this occasion he was driving a carriage and four. The country squire expressed surprise at the unexpected pleasure and the luxurious manner in which he was journeying, but Aubrey cheerfully answered that it was all right. He had been playing again, and this time had won £40,000 (Barker, 'Literary Anecdotes,' i. 106, 107).

Morning, noon, and night saw him seated at the card-table. For him there was no cessation, save for meals and sleep, from play. He was computed to have paid in the course of his long career no less than £60,000 for card-money, and his constant saying was that the greatest pleasure in life was winning at whist—the next greatest pleasure, losing. In that all whist-players will agree with him. 'It is better to have played and lost than never to have played at all.' After having lived to the patriarchal age of seventy-six, he died at Cheltenham in August, 1832, having no doubt fixed his establishment at that watering-place with the object of obtaining, among the Anglo-Indians abounding in its streets, his favourite amusement at moderate stakes.

Most of these men retained their equanimity of mind even in their direst straits of misfortune. Fox, indeed, when his friends thought that the sea of troubles must have swallowed him in its depths, was found at his lodgings calmly reading the legendary narrative of Herodotus. There are others,

however, who sank beneath the waves of anguish. Andrew Erskine, soldier and poet, fourth son of the fifth Earl of Kellie, and Jemmy Boswell's witty correspondent, was one of them. He indulged at cards, and was particularly partial to the game of whist. One day in October, 1793, when he had sustained a serious loss at this beloved pursuit, he 'became frantic, threw himself into the Forth [opposite Caroline Park], and perished.' When his body was found, five days afterwards, the premeditated nature of the act was at once revealed, for he had filled his pockets with stones.

G. H. Drummond, a member of the famous banking-house at Charing Cross, only played once in his whole life at White's Club, but that solitary occasion was the beginning of trouble to him. He lost £20,000 to Beau Brummell, and the necessity of raising the money brought home to his partners that he was an undesirable colleague in a business requiring for prosperity's sake the confidence of the public in its managers. They forced him to retire a sadder and a poorer, if not a wiser, man. The stroke of good fortune on Brummell's part reached the ears of the Prince Regent and the Duke of York, and he was again invited to Carlton House.

The end of the first George Payne was as tragic as that of Andrew Erskine, but his death was not due to his love of cards. His son, the second of the name, was the most popular of clubmen, and whatever the

points might be, his interest in the game never relaxed. True that he could not be bracketed equal with Clay or George Anson for the first place, but by common consent he would have been given a place among the wranglers. It was a treat, says the chronicler of the Pytchley Hunt, to hear him tell how at an hotel in Hyères 'he once sat down with three Frenchmen after the *table d'hôte*, and played for hours at "sou" points and a franc the rub.' His father was found one night at Watier's Club waiting quietly to make up a rubber at whist. Three players soon arrived, and the game began. All went smoothly, and nothing happened save that Payne seemed very anxious, although the table was not broken up until four or five o'clock, that the game should be continued to a still later hour. At ten the same morning Raikes the diarist was awakened by his servant with the terrible news that Payne had been shot in a duel on Putney Heath. The unhappy man had been playing all the night, and desired to play even longer, 'to pass the time until he was summoned into eternity, and no one could have told by his manner at the card-table that he had such an awful prospect in view.'

To losses in cards the death of the third Lord Rivers must undoubtedly be assigned. He was an inveterate gambler, and it was to him, it is sometimes said, that the French attributed the proud title of *Le Wellington des joueurs*. It is more

probable, however, that this honour was conferred by that witty nation on Lord Granville, his relation by marriage, who was long stationed in Paris as the English Ambassador, and with whose habits they were more familiarized. The mania of Lord Rivers for gambling was conspicuous when he was a plain commoner, Mr. Horace Beckford, and it was so well known to his predecessor in the title that he left a large portion of his property out of his successor's reach. His favourite place of resort for cards was the Union Club, and he invariably gambled for very high stakes. The story is current that one night he sat down there to play with £100,000 in bank-notes before him. A night of protracted and persistent ill-luck ruined him, and on Tuesday, January 25, 1831, after he had been missed for some days, the Serpentine was dragged, and his body was found near the waterfall. The coroner's jury, with its accustomed fatuity, brought in an open verdict, but it soon became known that the condition in which his body was found conclusively proved that the drowning was designed, and this was confirmed by the fact that on the previous Saturday he had lost considerable sums at play.

The marvellous fascination which whist exercises over the minds of men may be exemplified by an illustration drawn from the life of Elwes the miser. He, the most tenacious of mankind in his control of his purse, even when the expenditure of but a penny or two was involved, did not hesitate to engage in

conflict at cards for thousands of pounds. At a very early date in life, when known by the name of Meggot—for he was not born an Elwes—he was admitted as a member of Arthur's Club. He once played at cards there for two days and a night without intermission, and as the room was but of small dimensions, the members of the party, before it broke up, were nearly up to their knees in pasteboard. The Duke of Northumberland was one of this select band, and he never ceased while there was any chance of winning. Elwes at the end was on the wrong side by a thousand pounds or more, and there was only one thing that could soothe his intense agony at the magnitude of his loss. Throughout this memorable bout he ate nothing but lobster, and when he had parted with his money there was nothing in the world to console him but 'the tail of a good lobster.' Most whist-players have more than one string to their bow, and when Arthur's was not available, or whist-players were not to be found within its walls, he used to play at a card club that met in the Mount coffee-house, where he is said to have lost at piquet at one sitting not less than £3,000.

All the gamblers to be found in the ranks of the peerage pale their ineffectual fires before the presence of the first Lord Granville, who died in 1846. He held for many years the post of Ambassador at Paris, and the only objection which could with any show of plausibility be brought against him by his

political opponents so long as he held that post was that he was sometimes inclined to be indolent, or to neglect his official duty for the sake of his pleasures. At an evening party given by Lady Granville in the British Embassy in Paris, the whist-table was placed in the throne-room, and the four players were Montrond, Lamarc, Jacob Rothschild, and Lord Granville himself. One year, when the means of communication with the Continent were very slow in their operation, he had made the necessary arrangements to leave London, to which he had paid a short visit on official leave. His carriage and four posters were ordered to call for him at Graham's at four o'clock in the afternoon. They were kept waiting until ten, when he gave orders that they should be changed, as he would postpone his departure for an hour or two. The horses were changed no less than three times, at intervals of six hours, before the Ambassador could force himself to take leave of the company, and when the party reluctantly broke up he was nearly £10,000 poorer than when he began.

Lord Granville was presented at the Salon in Paris as *Le Wellington des joueurs*, and he was accustomed to resort, when in the French capital, to the *Cercle de l'Union* for his play. In a clever review of the treatise on whist by Deschapelles which appeared in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, vol. xxiv., and is attributed to B. E. B. Pote, it was announced that the *Moldavian Harp* newspaper had been suppressed for daring to speak with some

irreverence of the Russian Minister's propensity for a game at whist, and Pote added that he 'trembled for Lord Granville's Embassy.' The apprehension was unnecessary, as the French appreciated his other good qualities, and admired his style of play at whist.

When Henry Bentinck was asked for the names of the best whist-players that he knew, Lord Granville's name was the first on the list, and across the 'silver streak' an even greater authority, Deschapelles, the finest performer at the game that this world has ever produced, was repeatedly known to assert that with Lord Granville as his partner he would play dummy against an archangel. He was one of the four noblemen who lost £100,000 at Crockford's in a single night, his titled companions in misfortune being Lord Chesterfield, Lord Foley, and Lord Sefton. At one sitting at Graham's he lost a rubber, after giving the long odds, by forgetting that the seven of hearts had not been played, and for this act of forgetfulness he was mulcted in £3,400, and his losses at that single session, which lasted for nineteen hours, totalled up to £10,000. At another, when they began at midnight and finished at seven on the next evening, he lost £23,000 in all. It was acknowledged by himself that had he abandoned his favourite pursuits at one period in his life he would have left off a winner of £100,000, but his subsequent losses in hazard at Crockford's reached to

twice that sum. Still, in spite of all his losses, he left behind him no less a sum in cash than £160,000.

Lord Granville was one of the quartet when the funny incident which is chronicled in Lord Malmesbury's 'Memoirs of an ex-Minister' (i. 58, 59) occurred. Three of the players were Granville, Sefton, and Sir Watkin Wynn. The fourth is concealed as 'another famous player,' but all of them are recorded to have been playing very deep. It was the King of Wales's turn to deal, and whilst he did so Lord Granville turned round on his chair to speak to a friend who had taken up his station behind him. The deal was to decide the rubber, and several hundreds of pounds were staked on the result, for which the whole party waited in anxious expectation. To the surprise and dismay of Lord Granville, when he turned round to take up his hand, he found that there were no cards for him. At the same moment Sir Watkin cried out, 'I think I have too many cards.' He had, in a minute of aberration of intellect, dealt himself—such is the printed version of the story, but it may possibly have been that he inadvertently took up—two hands, so that he held in his hand twenty-six cards instead of half that number. 'The confusion was indescribable at this discovery. All the best whist-players were consulted, but they could not come to any decision. Hoyle had never thought it possible.'

For some years the leading circles of society in London were scandalized by the whispered rumour that one of its chief figures, a peer of the highest descent and of great attainments, was suspected of winning the money of his associates at cards by means of unfair practices. These suspicions became matters of public notoriety by the trial in the Court of King's Bench, on February 10 and 11, 1837, of an action which was brought by Henry Lord de Ros against Mr. John Cumming for libel in accusing him of cheating at cards. Lord de Ros was a man of fortune, but debarred from the usual pleasures of outdoor life by a debilitated frame, and by permanent stiffness of the joints. He was in the habit of playing whist at Graham's Club for a few hours every day, and it was at that club, on the night of July 1 and the morning of July 2, 1836, when playing with Lord Henry Bentinck, Cumming, and George Payne, that the truth of the current accusation against him is said to have been substantiated. A paragraph, acknowledged on all sides to be of an erroneous character, appeared in the *Satirist* newspaper, and it was against that paper that he first determined to bring his action. This was soon felt to be unsatisfactory, and it was mutually agreed that the action should be brought against Cumming; and Lord de Ros was formally charged by Cumming with having cheated while playing at the Travellers' Club, Graham's Club, and at Brighton. 'There were two

modes in which he was accused of unfair play—one was by marking the cards, the other by the *sauter la coupe* . . . in our homely English, by reversing the cut.' The last device was accomplished by his frequently contriving to have a violent fit of coughing when his deal came, which obliged him to put his hands under the table, with the result that he invariably turned up an honour. The witnesses of position who gave evidence more or less in his favour were Lord Wharncliffe, Lord Robert Grosvenor, Lord Clare, and Mr. Henry Baring, and the medical evidence in his favour was given by Sir William Lawrence and Dr. John Hyde.

The chief witnesses called on the other side were Mr. Hugh Higgins, of the 15th Dragoons; Captain J. Alexander, a half-pay navy commander (who acknowledged to considerable skill at piquet, and to a gain of about £10,000 in some twenty-five years); Brooke Greville, who, to ascertain the truth of the suspicions, had played with him at the Travellers' and afterwards examined the cards—and admitted that he himself had won £35,000 in five years, although in the year 1828 he had lost £14,000 at Brighton, and that he was not re-elected at Graham's after its reconstitution; Mr. Charles Greville, to whom some of the cards said to have been marked were carried for his examination; Sir William Ingilby, who excited roars of laughter by the clumsiness of his efforts to show the trick which Lord de Ros had committed in his presence

at least fifty, and possibly a hundred, times; Lord Henry Bentinck, whose evidence did not amount to much; Mr. George Payne, on whose statements the Attorney-General fastened with so much zest that Payne waited for him near the Law Courts with a horsewhip for two or three afternoons.

The Chief Justice, Denman — whose mother's fondness for whist, and her readiness to play, even in extreme old age, three or four rubbers at long whist without apparent fatigue, are recorded in Serjeant Ballantine's 'Experiences' — summed up the case with the strictest impartiality, and with some indication of sympathy with the plaintiff; but the jury, after a deliberation of less than fifteen minutes, delivered a verdict for the defendant. The *Times*, which gave long reports of the proceedings, contained an article on February 14 which commented severely on the injustice done to the plaintiff through the refusal of Sir William Ingilby and his associates to give the precise times and places when these sad events occurred. Lord de Ros left England for Rotterdam on the morning after the verdict, and died, disgraced and dishonoured, a few years later.

This unhappy man was acknowledged by Lord Henry Bentinck to be the third-best player that he had ever known; but, with all his skill, he lost one night a rubber on which the sum of £3,000 had been staked, by miscounting a trump. He had received frequent warnings about his conduct, but

seemed blind to all of them ; and Serjeant Ballantine, who had perused the report of the trial, and obtained much information on the subject from some of the most accomplished whist-players in England, was convinced that Lord de Ros 'furnished an example of a mind in most respects sound and intelligent, but subject to this one uncontrollable impulse.' His proceeding gave rise to many strokes of satire. A young member of the club who had watched him performing the trick of *sauter la coupe* —which the Attorney-General, afterwards Lord Campbell, miscalled, either by accident or design, in court by the words *couper la saute*—asked a veteran in the club what he should do. The answer which he is fabled to have received was, 'Back him, you fool!' Another man, with a not very clever sneer, remarked: 'I am afraid even to leave my card on him, for fear he'd mark it.' 'Oh!' said Charles Sheridan very quietly, in reply, 'that would at least depend on whether he thought it a high honour' (Hayward, 'Letters,' ii. 183, 184).

The glozing old Lord Chesterfield sat unmoved at the card-table, no matter what his luck might be. From the impassiveness of his face no one could divine the character of the cards which he held. In his younger days he won large sums from his less fortunate or less skilled companions; and his loss of office is sometimes said to have been due to the fact that he was once seen carrying his

winnings, amounting to some thousands of pounds, to the rooms of the Countess of Suffolk for safety. In his retirement at Blackheath, when more advanced in life, he was accustomed to form one 'every evening from seven till ten at a crown whist-party,' but he is careful to put on record that his object was 'merely to save my eyes from reading or writing for three hours by candlelight.' The memory of his youthful vices came back to him when he made his will, and he bound his godson and successor in the earldom and family estates to refrain, under a very severe penalty, from keeping racehorses or hounds, from resorting to Newmarket, or from losing 'in any one day, at any game or bet whatsoever, the sum of £500.' One generation passed away, and the injunction was disregarded. The Earl of Chesterfield that came to the title in 1815 was a breeder of racehorses, the Master of the Buckhounds, and a loser at Crockford's of about £200,000. One of his associates, Lord Sefton, the best 'whip' of his age, and the dispenser of the most lavish hospitality in London, laid down in the same rooms an equal slice of his princely fortune.

Most of these players were possessed of such ample resources in life that even such losses did not cripple them. To Commodore Vanderbilt, the founder of the family—who once boasted that when 'the Southern men were in their glory' he had won 20,000 dollars from them at cards in a single day—even larger sums would have been but a

flea-bite.' Some of them, however, were hampered for many subsequent years by the want of the money which they had dissipated in play. Any player of skill, but of limited means, who finds that his talents at whist are only rewarded by disappointment, and that his losses have amounted to a magnitude which he ought not, with a due regard to prudence, to incur again, should adopt the example of Cavour. This great statesman was a whist-player whose zeal for the game was unquenchable. One day he lost a larger sum than he could afford. 'Many men would have played on more recklessly; many men would have thrown down the cards in disgust; but Cavour for the future merely reduced his stakes' ('A Campaigner at Home'). May others in a like position have his manliness, and tread in his footsteps of good sense and moderation!

CHAPTER XI.

CLUBS AND CARDS.

A PERFECT picture of a section of club-life in the second half of this century is contained in Thackeray's description of the card-room at the Polyanthus. It depicts the 'grave and silent members sitting at the little green tables,' losing or winning without any outward expression of anxiety, pursuing in complete calmness their game, 'which is, in fact, the most elaborate science and study,' and thoroughly indifferent for hours together to the fortunes of the outside world. There sits Trumpington, the man of good parts and much reading, who makes for the game of whist a sacrifice of all other pleasures, and in the end rises a winner of three or four hundred a year. Well he may,' says Thackeray; 'with his brains, and half his industry, he could make a larger income at any other profession.' He, with others like unto him, sits there every day for years together, ready to welcome and play with any new-comer who may

wish it; and when he retires discomfited from the contest, 'they will make you a bow and wish you good-morning.'

Very different in style and manners were the clubs which were rife in London more than a century since. A notice of them is contained in the memoirs of J. S. Munden, the comedian. At some of them fines were inflicted on the members who were sober when the sittings were closed. There were whist clubs like the sixpenny card club long established at the Queen's Arms in St. Paul's Churchyard. There were other institutions at which curtains were drawn between the faces of the members, to conceal any expression of disappointment at a bad hand. Fox was said to have belonged to one such institution, and to have lost a large sum of money through someone playing against him who saw his cards reflected on the bright surface of some large steel buttons which he wore. The doer of this despicable act was the infamous Lord Barrymore, whose accidental death (he was shot by his own servant when only in his twenty-third year) put an end to a career which, brief as it was, has never been equalled for reckless dissipation. A second card club possessed a singular constitution devised to prevent a break in its continuity of existence. It was known by the name of 'the never-ending club,' for one of its laws provided that no member was to quit the table until a fresh-comer was ready to take his place. Days passed, and night often

succeeded to night, before a change occurred in the formation of these tables.

A hundred years ago the clubs of St. James's Street were devoid of the luxury which now prevails in them all, from the highest to the lowest; but the spirit of gambling, which has now dwindled almost to nothing, raged unchecked, and their points were fixed at such sums as involved the loss or gain of thousands, instead of hundreds of pounds. White's Club, not yet a political institution, was frequented by the leaders of society from both Whig and Tory coteries. Its rival, Brooks's Club, was built in 1777 as an 'avowedly political club, under the auspices of Fox,' and its success compelled the other establishment to adopt the colours of Toryism. Lord Mountford, whose tragic death has already been mentioned, was one of the leading figures at White's; the Duke of Devonshire and his political friends assembled at Brooks's. George Raggett was the owner of White's, and with it he carried on in St. James's Square a smaller club, called the Roxburgh; and at this, even more than at the better-known establishment in St. James's Street, high stakes always prevailed. On one celebrated occasion four performers—Harvey Combe, 'Tippoo' Smith, Ward (the member for London), and Sir John Malcolm—sat down to their cards on a Monday evening, and played without a break, save for some slight refreshment, through two nights and an entire day, until they separated at last at

eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning. Even at that time the only reason for their rising was that Combe was obliged to attend at the funeral of one of his partners in business. The result of their play was that Combe had won from Sir John Malcolm the enormous sum of £30,000. When the party broke up, Combe jocularly remarked to the loser: 'Well, Sir John, you shall have your revenge whenever you like.' The answer was: 'Thank you. Another sitting of the kind will oblige me to return to India.' Though Malcolm risked and paid large sums at play himself, he did not part with his money gladly to see others lose. In Paris, on August 2, 1815, after a visit to Waterloo, he 'went to the salon at Roberts', and saw gambling on a very great scale. I lost eight napoleons at rouge-et-noir, which I considered a very dear price for the sight' (Kaye, 'Life of Malcolm,' ii. 111).

At parting the fortunate winner handed to Raggett (who made it his practice to attend in person when high play was the rule, and found his reward in the counters which were left on the ground) a handful of counters, amounting in value to several hundreds of pounds, for sitting with them and attending to their wants. Raggett was a keen man of business, and bent on amassing a fortune for himself. With the object of keeping his clients together, whether in town or at the seaside, he opened on the Steyne at Brighton a small club, the

membership of which was limited to members of White's and Brooks's; and its visitors, who carried to the country the habits of Mayfair, indulged within its walls in the high play which they loved. This was one of the many clubs to which Byron belonged. Raggett's resolution was crowned with success. He started in life as a poor man, and died extremely rich.

About half a century before this date the means of communication did not allow the jaded denizens of London to pass from its streets to the shores of Brighthelmstone in a few hours, and when they desired a purer air and a clearer sky the gilded youth resorted to the terraces and groves of Richmond. A few hours spent in abstinence from their favourite amusements were sufficient to produce the inertness and lassitude which attend on the want of an enforced occupation. The pleasures of town life must be reproduced in the country, for by this means only could ennui be dispelled. Horace Walpole, when driving in June, 1749, to the toy-villa of Strawberry Hill, which he had just acquired, saw, as he crossed the green at Richmond, the familiar figures of Lord Bath, Lord Lonsdale, and half a dozen more of the habitués of White's, sauntering at the door of a house which they had taken there, and were in the habit of visiting every Saturday and Sunday to play at whist. The topographer of Richmond, a Mr. Crisp, believes the house to have been No. 17 on the Green, and adds

that for many years it was familiar to residents and visitors as the 'London Coffee-house.' At Richmond, as at most of the spas which sprung up in England during the century which followed the restoration of the Stuarts, the fashionable games of social life, both indoors and in the open air, were practised without a check from their start to their decay. In 1730 the wells at Richmond were described in the usual advertisements as a suitable place for ladies and gentlemen to indulge in the games of 'quadrille, ombre, and whist.'

Too often an excessive indulgence in such amusements compelled the reckless man of fashion to seek for a splendid exile in one of the States of America or in a European Embassy. Poor Jack Mostyn, Colonel of the First Regiment of Dragoon Guards, was driven in 1771 to avail himself of the retreat from London creditors which was afforded by the governorship of Mahon, in the island of Minorca. He carried with him an inalienable craving for the pleasures which he was compelled to leave behind him in his native land. His first care was to establish in this pleasant place of banishment a 'White's Club,' to remind him of the beloved house in St. James's Street. It was a whist-club, and its members were drawn from the officers stationed in the garrison at Mahon. Mostyn died late in 1778.

Watier's Club, at the corner of Bolton Street, in Piccadilly, was kept by an old *maitre d'hôtel* of the

Prince Regent, who was probably driven from his post on an arbitrary reduction of his establishment. The old servant's heart was in his business, and he took a legitimate pride in the dishes and wines which he set before his guests. Byron was a member about 1815, and called it 'a superb club at that time.' Macao, as well as whist, flourished within its walls, and Brummell shone in it for a dozen years; but the club came to an untimely end in 1819, by which time the original members had passed into another world, or been driven into expatriation from their own country, and the vacant places had been taken by a new set, most of whom proved to be no better than blacklegs. It was at Watier's that the incident took place which is set out in Swinburne's 'Courts of Europe' (ii. 217). A party was assembled at whist, and one of the players was a Mr. B., who is said to have 'occupied a good deal of public attention' through a discussion in which he was engaged with a certain Lord D. To the astonishment of the members in the room, B. suddenly put down his cards, whipped a pair of pistols out of his pocket, and placed them on the table by his side. This extraordinary act is described as due to the sudden appearance of Lord A. (no doubt the witty Lord Alvanley), who had just entered the room, and was a kind of *bête noire* to B. The new-comer was not a whit disconcerted at this sudden and unexpected act. All he did was to remark, with the accustomed wit for

which he was famous: 'I hope you do not expect your adversary to follow suit.'

Crockford's, at the top of St. James's Street, on the west side—the frame of the building was substantially the same as that now occupied by the Devonshire Club, though the entrance was originally from Piccadilly, and numerous alterations have been effected in the interior—was the centre of the highest play ever practised in England. The proprietor, William Crockford, was originally known as a small fishmonger, with a shop near Temple Bar; but, in partnership with a man called Taylor, he took Watier's old club-house, and reopened its doors. They made much money at the game of hazard, but at the end of the first year agreed to separate. Crockford removed to St. James's Street, and after a year of great prosperity had amassed sufficient money to instruct the Wyatts to prepare the plans for his new house. Under their guidance the building was duly constructed, and it was opened in 1827 as a club, with the right of election to membership vested in a committee.

To make the new house more attractive still, the services of a leading *chef* were required, and Ude, who was now without a place, through the death of the Duke of York, was engaged. Ude had long been famous in London society, for very soon after his arrival in England he was engaged at a salary of £300 per annum by Lord Sefton, whose dinner-parties soon became the delight of the *bon-vivant*,

and his old age was provided for by an annuity of £100. When Ude quitted his place at Crockford's, its owner engaged another artist of the highest reputation — a man hardly less famous in his day, and to us better known, perchance, namely, Francatelli. The fame of these suppers, and the amounts lost at play, soon became the talk of London, and drew from Theodore Hook the witty application of the lines in Scripture, 'He filleth the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.'

The most famous of the original members was the Duke of Wellington, but he very seldom came to the building, and never gambled for excessive amounts. Whist was sometimes played, but hazard was the favourite pastime, and by it many members of the nobility lost upwards of £10,000 at a single sitting. Not many years passed away before Crockford was included in the list of English millionaires. 'A vast sum, perhaps half a million, was due to him' from his aristocratic clients, but he extracted from them all the spoil that they could possibly yield. He retired in 1840 with accumulations little short of a million of money. The club languished for a few years longer, but it was at last dissolved, though not before its success had called many 'hells' into existence.

In a house numbered 87, at the other end of St. James's Street, but on the same side of the way, was situated the room in which the most

scientific whist-players used to congregate every afternoon and evening. This was Graham's Club, called from the names of the proprietors, father and son, who kept it successively for many years. It was described as a 'most unpretending club, as far as appearances are concerned,' and as the house is even now but little altered from its original state, any passer-by can see that the description was justifiable. But in their capacity for solving the intricacies of card-play its members were unrivalled, and at this date its memory remains with every Londoner who dwells in the past history of its streets and houses as the home of the most brilliant whist-play ever seen in England. It was at Graham's that Lord Henry Bentinck invented the Blue Peter, or call for trumps, the explanation of which was first given by 'Cælebs' in his treatise on whist. It was at Graham's that Lord de Ros attracted suspicion for cheating, and that the incidents occurred which led to a public exposure of his conduct in the Law Courts.

The most famous players in the annals of whist met around its tables, and vied with one another for the supremacy in reputation and in gain. Most of them are still remembered in every card circle. One of them, now forgotten, was the wild and extravagant father of Miss Mitford. Though she was ruined by his folly, which was not confined to the card-table, she gloried in his reputation at piquet and whist, boasting in a letter to one of her friends,

which was written in 1842, when she was far advanced in life, that 'he was reckoned one of the six best players in London.' Graham's Club was dissolved on December 31, 1836, but was immediately reconstituted. The object of this temporary dissolution was to obtain the exclusion of some ten or twelve persons who had crept into a society they were not fit for. They played for excessive stakes which they were unable to pay, and were undesirable associates in other ways. It dragged on a precarious existence for a few years longer, when the proprietor found that he could not obtain the payment from most of the members of the subscriptions which they had undertaken to discharge, and determined upon closing its doors. In this ignoble fashion died the most illustrious whist club which has ever flourished in the United Kingdom.

The card clubs in and around Pall Mall are three in number, and the most famous of them without doubt is the Portland. Its first home was in Bloomsbury Square, when its members were largely drawn from the City, and after a brief residence in Jermyn Street, the club migrated to Stratford Place. There it was fixed for a short period only; but for many years its members used to meet at their house in Oxford Street, at the east corner of Stratford Place, in a house which is said to have been famous about 1810 'for the hospitalities and gaieties of Mrs. Lind'; but that building is now demolished, and its occupants have removed to a

more convenient place of assembly. They are now housed on the north side of St. James's Square in a mansion at the south-west corner of York Street, and since the date of their removal the number of the members has considerably increased. The new rooms are spacious and well ventilated, with shafts carrying away to the roof the fumes of smoke and the heated air. The tables are constructed with the latest devices for allowing the players to pick up the cards most easily and expeditiously, and a general air of comfort reigns throughout the building.

At its dinners—Serjeant Ballantine is our witness —'much good fellowship prevailed,' and if the play at some of the tables was at times for an excessive amount, a game for more moderate stakes could generally be obtained by those who wished it. At the Portland may at this time, as at any year since its opening, be observed the most skilful of the London card-players. A distinguished peer or two of great whist distinction still haunt its rooms. A law officer of the Crown, past or present, may now and then be seen playing a dashing game of whist within its walls.

The second card club in importance is no doubt the Baldwin, which has its habitat in Pall Mall East. A great gulf separates its rooms in point of luxury from those of its richer rival, but that is the only respect in which it need confess to inferiority. In social standing its members are *sans reproche;* its points are moderate, yet of sufficient size to engage

the interest of the players, and the excellence of their play is above any feeling of doubt.

The third whist club, the St. James's, is, and has been for some time, domiciled at 87, St. James's Street, in the rooms formerly known as Graham's. It has been recently remodelled, and is probably now entering upon a long course of prosperity.

Lord Henry Bentinck and Mr. James Clay are perhaps the two most prominent celebrities among whist-players that are associated in memory with the Portland. Bentinck was the fourth surviving son of the fourth Duke of Portland, and his mother was a daughter of that mighty whist-player, Major-General Scott, whose fame has been portrayed in a previous page. He was a man of considerable ability, but of infrequent speech, and with manners extremely reserved. When he did open his mouth, it was usually in response to a question from one of his colleagues at the card-table, and his answer was not always of the most flattering character to his associates. He was asked on one occasion for the best whist-players that he knew, and in reply he mentioned the names of Lord Granville, the Hon. George Anson, and Lord de Ros. His questioner was not content with this answer, and asked for the name of the fourth. Lord Henry hesitated, and at last put the question by, but might without undue vanity have pointed to himself. Most people would have assigned the fourth place either to him or to his rival, James Clay, and everyone competent to

judge would have acknowledged that both were very fine whist-players. As a double-dummy player Lord Henry was in his generation without a rival, but 'Cavendish' considered that he sometimes erred in ordinary whist through not varying his play to suit the character of his partner, and through unwillingness to alter his original resolve when the force of events rendered such a course desirable.

Bentinck was 'indifferent to the stakes which he played,' but at times rivalled Sarah Battle in his strict adherence to the rules of the game, from which nothing could induce him to vary even a hair's-breadth. He remarked to Ballantine that although in the long-run he had been a winner at the noble science, it was only to a very trifling extent, and he brought the smallness of his gains home to his hearer by the words 'that he should have made more as a journeyman glazier.' The call for trumps was his invention, and he afterwards regretted his ingenuity, for to him, as to most players since his time, it has been made clear that in the hands of an incompetent performer the invention has added additional danger to the game.

The causticity of his temper is shown by an incident recorded most recently by Sir William Fraser. Bentinck was invited to stay for a few days at Middleton Park in Oxfordshire as the guest of the Jerseys. Some days before his arrival Lady Jersey scoured the country in search of whist-players, and invited to her house specially for the occasion the

three best performers that the shire could produce. On the evening of the great man's arrival from town the whist-party was made up after dinner, and Lady Jersey thought that her guest's happiness was complete. After a decent interval of half an hour or so the hostess approached the table, and with a smile on her face put the question, 'Lord Henry, how do you get on? How do they treat you?' He turned to her with the words, 'Pray, Lady Jersey, what do you call this game? It is so very amusing.'

It was probably of Bentinck that the following anecdote is told. 'Why did you play that card?' was the question incautiously put to a good player by an astonished bystander. 'For the very sufficient reason,' was the answer in a loud stage whisper, 'that my partner is a muff.' Some other instances of his powers of sarcasm are set out in 'Cavendish's' 'Card Essays,' pp. 167-173.

Bentinck was a true sportsman, either in hunting, fishing, or shooting. He excelled in them all, and his energies remained unwearied all day long. As a master of hounds his name is 'linked indelibly with the Burton Hunt.' In the country his days were spent in sport in the open air; when in town, his afternoons were passed in whist at the Portland Club. He was born in June, 1804, and died quietly among his own people at Tathwell Lodge on the last day of 1870.

George Anson, whom Bentinck placed second in

the line of whist-players, was the next brother to the first Earl of Lichfield. His interests were not confined to card-playing, for he made a 'handsome income on the turf.' All of his contemporaries admired his handsome looks, his ease of manners, and his practical ability, but some of them grumbled at his luck. He had been an ensign at Waterloo, but had left the army for many years, when his good fortune brought him the post of Commander-in-Chief in one of the Indian dependencies. His luck continued even longer, for soon after his arrival in India he was promoted to be Commander-in-Chief of all the forces within its limits. There he died on May 27, 1857, but his body was brought to England and interred at Kensal Green Cemetery on February 5, 1860. It was to George Anson that Mr. Baldwin suggested the desirability of revising and remodelling the rules of whist. Anson laid down on one occasion the dictum that it was 'the height of bad play to lead from a suit with nothing higher than a ten if you had a suit with an honour to lead from,' unless—and this limitation of his opinion ought to ensure its adoption—'from strength in trumps there was a possibility of bringing in the small cards.'

There was an amusing rivalry between Bentinck and Clay. Each of them went about the country declaring 'that the other knew nothing of the game'; but Clay was for nearly thirty years the acknowledged head of whist in England, and in

billiards he was for a time 'the champion player amongst amateurs.' What particularly struck 'Cavendish' in watching Clay's hands at whist was the 'extreme brilliancy' of his game. He usually followed the accustomed rule, but he knew when to depart from it. Above all, he hated false cards. His father was a general merchant in London, and he sent his son to the University of Oxford. In early years he lived on intimate terms of friendship with Benjamin Disraeli, and, like him, he turned to politics, but throughout life Clay's opinions were those of advanced Liberalism. He contested Beverley in 1837, but without success, and when he wooed the constituency of Hull in 1841, to him fell the lot of the rejected lover. When returned for this Yorkshire seaport—for his subsequent efforts to gain her good graces were crowned with success—he rarely troubled the House of Commons with his speeches, but on the hustings his skill in oratory won many votes. His voice was 'clear and flexible,' his manners were pronounced 'easy and affable.' His strength and his weakness are portrayed under the disguise of Castlemaine in Lawrence's novel 'Sans Merci.'

Among the other members of the Portland Club, Mr. Charles Ross, who died in 1860, was perhaps the best known. He sat in Parliament for a few years both before and after the Reform Bill, and was Lord of the Treasury in Sir Robert Peel's short-lived Administration of 1834-35. The corre-

spondence of the great Lord Cornwallis was edited by him with great care and with ample knowledge of the personages of the period, and this task was undertaken by him as the husband of one of the coheiresses of the last Marquis. He had other qualities of which he could boast. 'As an authority on points of Parliamentary procedure, he was almost without a rival; as a whist-player, he was famous in a whist-playing age. For some unknown reason he came under the censure of the then Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, and was pilloried in "Coningsby" as Mr. Earwig.'

An equally conspicuous figure at the Portland was Johnny Bushe, son of the Chief-Justice of Ireland who figures in Miss Edgeworth's story of 'Patronage,' a judge whose witty sayings often lighted up the dulness of the cases with which he had to deal. The son was hardly less bright or amusing, and with an abundance of animal spirits which did not desert him even when advanced in life. His parties in his rooms in the Albany 'were always highly appreciated,' and in the club his presence was ever welcome. Dr. Jones, father of 'Cavendish,' and a whist-player worthy of inclusion in the same list with his son, was another of the frequenters of the whist-room at the Portland, and among its most regular attendants when in London was General Windham, whose name is for ever associated with the storming of the Redan.

The Union Club was started about 1804, and its

members were then accommodated in a house in Pall Mall, which has long since been absorbed into the War Office. After a few years it was removed to the house in St. James's Square which is said to have become the town house of the Bishop of Winchester, and in both of these places was known as one of the chief gambling resorts in the West End. Very high play was long the rule of the club, and one of the chief gamblers was the Lord Rivers commemorated in a previous page. In St. James's Square the club died for a time, but from its ashes in 1821 rose the present Union Club, which was happily remodelled as a members' club. The existing building in Trafalgar Square, known to all of us who swim with the full tide of human life that ebbs and flows that way, was built in 1824 from the designs of Smirke, and was long thronged by bankers and lawyers. Serjeant Ballantine for many years played within its walls almost daily, and has chronicled for the benefit of posterity some of its players. Alexander Mitchell, long known in Parliament as member for the now destroyed borough of Bridport, used to take a place at the card-table at the Union, and justly earned the title of a 'first-rate whist and piquet player.' The Serjeant, with becoming partiality for a friend, speaks of the very decided mark which he made in the House 'by some exceedingly lucid financial speeches.'

Among its other members who enjoyed their game of whist at the Union during recent years

may be mentioned Sir Adam Hay, Sir George Coulthurst, Henry Spicer (the novelist and friend of Charles Dickens), Captain Ward (son of the great cricketer who sat in Parliament for the City of London), Mr. A. M. Moore (the private secretary of Lord Randolph Churchill, a man who literally killed himself in the service of his chief), Mr. Charles Grey, of the India Office, Mr. Fitzgerald, of the Indian Civil Service, Mr. Cosmo Bonsor and Mr. A. W. Ridley, the cricketer. Another of the members of the Union Club, and a whist-player familiar to many of us at Bournemouth and in London as ever ready for a game, and carrying into it much cheerful optimism, is a gentleman whose kindly essays on the mysteries of whist and the habits of its devotees have gladdened of late years the readers of *Temple Bar*.

Anthony Trollope inherited his mother's love of whist-playing, as well as her aptitude for novel-writing. He has told us of his 'great delight in playing a rubber in the little room upstairs of an afternoon' at the Garrick, how it became a daily habit with him, and how he tried, but tried in vain, to discontinue an amusement which he does not shrink from stigmatizing as having, after all, 'not very much to recommend it.' This was possibly an unworthy concession to popular prejudice. At all events, when he had penned it there came to his mind the truer reflection that 'without cards he would be very much at a loss.'

Memories of many illustrious players hover around the walls of the card-rooms in these West End clubs. Their merits and their faults are handed down from generation to generation; and the play of the leading exponent of the science in this age is contrasted, not always to his advantage, with that of the veteran who ruled the room forty years ago. Whist at the Garrick is depicted in 'On and Off the Stage' by the Bancrofts. The lord and master of that household summons to our view from the shadowy mist of the past the names and characteristics of its chief executants. He pictures in its card-room 'the ever-kindly presence of Lord Anglesey . . . the strongly-marked features and deep-toned voice of Sir Charles Taylor; the merry eye and musical brogue of Charles Lever . . . the gruff exterior which hid the soft and tender heart of Anthony Trollope . . . the occasional visits of courtly James Clay (the former companion of Lord Beaconsfield in foreign travel, and a monarch at the whist-table); the more frequent presence of Sir George Colthurst.' He sees 'kindly Joe Langford and dear old "Bunsby" (Merewether, Q.C.) arrive for their rubber, "cutting-in" with gentle pipe-loving Edward Breedon (who bore so little of the aspect of having once been a dandy in the Guards); the great novelist who wrote "Hard Cash"; and Dr. Duplex, who once prescribed for Edmund Kean—who complete the table.'

Many reminiscences of Charles Reade are printed

in Coleman's volumes on 'Players and Playwrights.' According to their vivacious author, Anthony Trollope bitterly resented the dramatic version of his novel of 'Ralph, the Heir,' which Charles Reade had written for the stage, and for some time after its production they 'frequently took part in a game of whist at the Garrick without exchanging one word with each other.' When they were without sufficient players to form a quartet, Reade and Coleman, with a third, sometimes played a game of dummy whist. The whimsical novelist took dummy, 'and always beat us.' This was to his taste. On one occasion Coleman and Reade went to the Egyptian Hall, when it was in the hands of Maskelyne and Cooke, to see Psycho play a rubber of whist. Reade was convinced that he had discovered the mystery of the performance, and mounted the platform with the object of proving his 'system' to the discomfiture of Psycho. The same result occurred to Reade that happens to the rash performers who play on a 'system' at Monte Carlo. He descended from the platform the picture of the deepest woe. 'To his astonishment he had been beaten easily, almost ignominiously.' His mortification was visible in his face and in his tones. He complained, without ceasing, that he had been beaten 'three games running by a beastly automaton.'

John Heneage Jesse, the ardent whist-playing son of an ardent whist-playing father, used, long

before he quitted the Admiralty, to pass his evenings at the Garrick Club. There he sat, 'a well-known figure, and always a welcome one, for he was very popular, at the whist-table,' until the small hours of the morning came and the rest of the party left for their homes. He proceeded then to his chambers in the Albany Court Yard, looking out on Piccadilly, and spent a few hours more before bedtime in compiling the books of gossip and anecdote which bear his name. When immersed in one of his games at the Garrick, his portrait, 'a life-like pencil-sketch,' was furtively drawn by the present Sir John Millais on the envelope of a letter. It was pronounced a 'wonderful likeness.'

Montagu Williams tells a story in which Keeley, the comedian, and an illustrious lawyer still alive took part. The old actor used to play almost every afternoon at the Garrick, of which he had long been a member, and to play a silent rubber, for he hated conversation during whist. Not many months before his death the distinguished lawyer was his partner. When the rubber was over, he turned his head, after a moment's thought, to the lawyer, and said: 'Why didn't you lead spades?' The answer was: 'I didn't think it the game.' 'Well, then, you're a fool,' said Keeley, and shuffled in a pet out of the room. A few days afterwards they met again at the Garrick, when Keeley ran after his late partner as if he were going to apologize. 'I have been thinking,' he said, with the same stolid look on his face, 'over

that little affair about the spades, and I find that I am right. You *are* a fool!'

At the Travellers' Club, for some years after its foundation, whist, with very high stakes, was the rule in the evenings. The last three words are of great importance, and prove the difference of social custom between one generation and another. Now there is much more whist in a London club between the hours of five and seven than after dinner. Sixty years ago the fashion was different, and in the original rules of the Travellers' Club it was inculcated on its members that 'No cards shall be introduced before dinner.' Some of the most famous whist-players in London used to meet around its card-tables. Lord de Ros played there occasionally, and Prince Talleyrand, when on this side of the 'silver streak,' used to join the little coterie of players that assembled within its walls. Often when in England would he leave the whist-table at three in the morning, and then go home to dictate despatches to a secretary for one hour or two (Raikes, 'France since 1830,' ii., p. 249). Abraham Hayward weighed the mighty ecclesiastic in the balance of opinion, and found him 'but an indifferent performer,' though he had 'a great advantage in his imperturbability of face.'

The Windham Club, established at Lord Blessington's house in the north-west corner of St. James's Square, has always numbered some excellent whist-players among its members, but they are more

accustomed to gather for card purposes in other clubs to which they belong than within this building. Among the frequenters of the Athenæum are not a few players of the greatest distinction. Abraham Hayward was long a leading figure in its card-room. His play was good, and few men have possessed a more extensive knowledge of the history of card-playing or of card-players. His knowledge was freely imparted to the world, and his writings are now the choicest possessions of all those interested in the gossip and anecdote of this century. One distinguished family, now represented in the baronetage, has produced several whist-players of high repute ; but by far the most distinguished was the Master of the Rolls, who found in cards at the Athenæum the relaxation needed in a life of active business. The conspicuous skill of Mr. Spencer Perceval, for many years a member and committee-man at the Athenæum, is still lauded by his admiring contemporaries. Dr. Pole, whose 'Philosophy of Whist' takes a very high place among the treatises on the game, is a member of the club, and among those at the same table may often be seen a law lord or two from Scotland or Ireland.

Card-playing has flourished at the Reform Club since the day, now more than half a century ago, of its foundation. Mr. Pendarves, who long represented the Western Division of Cornwall in the Whig interest, was, when his Parliamentary duties admitted, a regular attendant of its card-room. Bernal

Osborne was one of its most zealous professors, and his portrait, a ghastly head which Pellegrini painted after his death from a photograph, hangs in its card-room. The other portrait in the room is that of Fox Maule, Lord Dalhousie, a keen whist-player at the Reform. For many years the dominating spirit of its life was Mr. Robert Wheble, one of the finest whist-players with whom it has been my lot to be associated in fortune or in misfortune. His perception was marvellously acute, and his instinct rarely failed him. He did best what thousands of other men of commanding talents and illustrious positions have attempted to do, and his name was familiar to hundreds of card-players in every rank of life, yet such is the mockery of social fame, that his sudden death on the last day of 1890 would have passed unnoticed, save for a letter from a club friend, which was admitted in the columns of the *Daily News*. Mr. George McDowell, a Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and an Irish friend, who were considered the two best players in that city, went with all the ardour of their race to Paris to try conclusions with the great Deschapelles, and returned with the information that they were quite unable to cope with him. McDowell played at the Reform Club, and was one of its most efficient performers. Another of the players who met within its walls was Mr. Christopher Idle, who was connected with the sporting papers. He had been educated at Graham's, and graduated at the Port-

land. He had also seen much whist on the Continent, and had begun a volume on the difference between French and English whist.

Forster, the Irish Secretary, enjoyed the game of whist beyond his fellows, and never tired of its intricacies. 'If there were only two other men, he would play dummy; if only one, double dummy.' But in spite of all this exuberant enthusiasm, his best friends could not have claimed for him the merit of being a good player. Indeed, it was only on very rare occasions that he 'got through a rubber quite to his own satisfaction, and still less to that of his partner.' This did not, however, diminish his interest in the game, nor destroy his good temper, and he could bear with equanimity the rebukes of his partners. Nay, more, he could recognise their justice. Mr. James Payn, who played whist at the Reform Club for many years, and was always greeted by the inmates of the card-room with the warmest of welcomes, has given one delightful illustration of Forster's natural humour. Forster had won from him on one particular afternoon a good many rubbers, and had received in return a reproachful look or word for the favours which Fortune had showered on him. 'My dear fellow,' said he in response, and lit up the remark with his humorous smile, 'you are quite right. Call me any names you like. If it is any satisfaction to you or relief to your feelings, call me *Buckshot Forster*, if you will.'

Two historic rubbers were played at the Reform Club on June 18, 1877. General Grant was visiting England. The doors of the Reform Club had been opened to him as a temporary member for one month — from June 1, 1877 — and among the festivities with which he was greeted was a dinner given to him on June 18, by some fifty members of the club, in its noble dining-room. The guest of the evening would not smoke, and after dinner he was invited to take part in a rubber of whist, a game which he liked. The four who sat down to the card-table were Grant, Lord Granville, the late Foreign Secretary, son of the Ambassador to Paris, and the recipient of his lessons in whist, Mr. W. E. Forster, and Colonel Strode. In the first contest of skill, Colonel Strode played against the General, and in the second as his partner. Both were won by this distinguished visitor to English shores, who thus carried away, in addition to the recollection of a princely repast, a few sovereigns which he had legitimately earned. The last member of this quartet had played a good deal, and notably on a voyage of five months' duration from Australia. Among the *voyageurs* were Sir George Gipps, the ex-Governor of New South Wales, and his wife, and they could only obtain the nocturnal game of whist in which they so much delighted through the kindness of Colonel Strode and a doctor from New Zealand, who sat down to the card-table with them night after night. The ship was crowded

with passengers, many of whom were card-experts, but they had been so trampled upon at the whist-table by Sir George, when he ruled over the destinies of their colony and domineered over its social life, that they, one and all, though enamoured of the game, took their revenge by declining to sit down with him.

Whist at the Carlton has never flourished with the same vigour as in its political rival, and a few years since it died away. Its chief figure used to be George W. P. Bentinck ('Big Ben'), member for West Norfolk. Its celebrity now is Lord Knightley, who sat in the House of Commons for nearly forty years almost in silence, and has since been relegated to the obscurity of the peerage. Throughout his life he has been accepted as an authority on the game and its rules. He was one of the seven members deputed, in 1863, to supervise, on behalf of the Arlington Club, its ancient procedure, and he is now the only survivor of the seven.

At the Oxford and Cambridge Club the science of whist is extinct, but years ago three players, who could hold their own against any competitors in England, were included in its list of members. James Clay, who used to play there as well as at the Portland and other clubs, stands out from all competitors. Another of its members, Mr. Wyvill, who still survives and still plays his rubber with vigour at the Bournemouth Club, bears a name conspicuous in the ranks of reform a century since. The third

player, Mr. Henry Blair Mayne, son of the Rector of Limpsfield, in Surrey, was from 1859 to 1870 Senior Clerk in the House of Commons, and from the latter date was Chief Clerk of Private Bills. His talent for games was acknowledged by all, and he could cope with Clay and Wyvill on terms of equality. At Christ Church he was a first-rate oar, in cricket there was no better 'all-round player,' and in the world of London whist he knew but few superiors. He, too, was one of the illustrious seven from the Arlington Club who aided in reducing and consolidating the rules of whist into their present shape. Its theory and practice he had studied with zest, and one of the conclusions which he drew was that 'he who leads trumps the oftenest will win the most rubbers.' Mayne died on January 17, 1892.

Once a month a select party of residents, stationed at Hampton Court, or dwelling in the pleasant country which surrounds it, used to gather, under the title of the Toy Club, 'at the old tumbledown inn disfiguring the approach to the barracks.' This is a lady's description of its appearance, but Grantley Berkeley, who belonged to the club and knew the creature comforts which the inn could supply, gave it the fond name of 'the dear old Toy Inn.' They dined together with the Duke of Clarence, as the president, and among the well-known faces that assembled around the table and 'held high revel' were Edward Jesse, the naturalist, father of John Heneage Jesse, the clever compiler of many

amusing volumes; Lord George Seymour; Sir George and Sir Horace Seymour; Colonel, afterwards Sir Henry Wheatley; and Grantley Berkeley himself. The dinner was always marked by mirth, for the Duke liked it, and his boyish fun kept the company in good humour, especially as the rest of the guests knew his weakness for 'marrow puddings,' and gratified him by including the dish in their *menu*.

This Royal Duke did not waste his resources in gambling. Cards with him were not attended by excessive expense. Still, he was very fond of his rubber, and played it after he came to the throne. Charles Greenwood, the army agent, an old man of eight-four, dined with him at the Pavilion, Brighton, on January 25, 1832, and while playing a game of whist after dinner was stricken by death. Greenwood was a good-natured, friendly man; but Jekyll, when narrating the incident, added the sarcastic touch that he possessed 'a good deal of vanity, which would have been gratified had he known he was to die at the table of a King' (Jekyll's 'Correspondence,' 1894, pp. 295, 296).

With Edward Jesse the love of whist amounted to a passion. Almost before they had ceased to wear frocks his two daughters were initiated into the game, and played the nightly rubber. If they were reduced to dummy, he consoled himself with the reflection that three-handed whist was the best school for a novice. Clay is said—the authority is

one of his daughters—to have placed him at the head of the vast army of second-class players. Sir Horace Seymour was the father of the present Lord Alcester, and Sir George Seymour had also a peer for his son, the late Lord Hertford. Colonel Wheatley, who later in his career was known as Sir Henry Wheatley, lived on the Green; and an old inhabitant of the Palace, who also belonged to the club, though, happily for his reputation, his name is hidden from us, used to show, when beaten, the quickness of his temper by a reckless use of strong language, and by hurling his cards to the other end of the room. The recognised points of the club were half-crowns, and some of the bolder members of the company would indulge in a bet of a sovereign on the rubber. But this was always discouraged by Jesse, who would not join in the practice, and he always averred that by keeping to the same stakes he neither won nor lost at the end of the year—a conclusion much to be desired for every player.

About thirty years ago two excellent whist clubs existed in London. One, which rejoiced in the title of the 'Cavendish,' was established in part of that building in the upper section of Regent Street which is known to us as the Polytechnic. Its rival, originally called the Westminster Chess Club, found, after many changes of situation, convenient and attractive rooms in the Caledonian Hotel on the Adelphi Terrace, and the volumes on whist and chess, usually designated the 'Westminster Papers,'

were mainly compiled by its members. The list of its members included many fine players, among whom were Waller Lewis, Henry Jessell, Henry Selfe Selfe, the Metropolitan magistrate, Bartle Laurie Frere and F. H. Lewis. Thomas Wilson Barnes, who died August 20, 1874, aged forty-nine, was another, and on one occasion when at a party in a friend's house he signalized himself by staying to play whist from Saturday night to Wednesday morning, by which time it came to be a match at double dummy. He was 'remarkably strong in the end game, but opened it carelessly,' and he was timid. Barnes was also a fine classic and a first-class mathematician. Both these clubs have long since faded away.

CHAPTER XII.

KINGS AND THEIR SUBJECTS AT WHIST.

The charms of cards have brought into subjection both the most brilliant and the least cultivated of monarchs. Napoleon premier fell under their sway while yet a subject, and when fortune called upon him to rule over the wittiest race in the world, their hold over his affections remained in undiminished force. Had the Queen of Prussia led him to the card-table, and, with him as a partner, triumphed over their opponents at whist, that beloved possession which she tempted him in vain to continue under her country's rule might have remained undisturbed in her husband's kingdom. The second George of England did not yield to Napoleon in personal courage, and resembled him in his passionate love of cards. He hated poets and painters, but at whist he never tired. It was his nightly relaxation, and his invariable stipulation was that his particular friend and Gentleman of his Bedchamber, General Mostyn, should play with him.

If the story told by Mr. Percy Fitzgerald in his

memoir of the brilliant weathercock, Charles Townshend, can be accepted, a knowledge of the game of whist made the fortunes of the favourite adviser of George II.'s son, the Scotch Earl of Bute. His apothecary took him in his carriage to Egham races, which were then under the patronage of 'only Fred,' the Prince of Wales, and at which a tent had been pitched for his reception. During the intervals of the races some amusement was required to keep ennui from seizing on the Prince, and a rubber of whist was suggested. A fourth player of sufficient position in the world to become a partner of the heir to the throne was needed, and when the Scotch Earl was found to be acquainted with the game, he was brought in to complete the quartet. The play of the hands proved so interesting that Bute was unable to get away until the apothecary had left in his carriage. The peer was stranded many miles from his home, and the Prince insisted on carrying him to the royal residence of Cliefden, where he made the best use of his opportunities, and ingratiated himself with the Prince and his spouse. From that time his influence controlled the actions of them both. This chance meeting secured for Lord Bute the position of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

The Scotch Premier found among his countrymen many ready to follow his example in playing at cards, either for amusement or in hope of advancement, but a few of them were ignorant of such

frivolities. When Sir Andrew Mitchell, a Scotch diplomatist still remembered for his shrewdness and his caustic repartees, first arrived, as the British representative, at Berlin, the Ministers who invited him, in accordance with official etiquette, to their houses, found considerable perplexity in providing him with amusement. His education had been neglected; he played at no game of cards, and the anxious hosts inquired among themselves, 'What shall we do with this Englishman who never plays at cards?' Such a question had not been asked of David Hume when he accompanied Lord Hertford on his embassy to Paris. Whist then absorbed all the mental energies of the French courtiers and their dames, and they partook of its pleasures at every opportunity. Hume was ever ready to 'cut in' with them. In the words of the Scotch poet who babbled in 1791 of whist to the extent of twelve cantos, his nation's philosopher 'till his dying day continued still his fav'rite game to play.' He piqued himself on his play, and his friends encouraged him in the pursuit, though they soon found that he needed but very little application of the spur.

Before Hume built his house in the New Town, he occupied a lodging in the lofty building called St. James's Court, Edinburgh, on the south side of the earthen mound. On the floor below him dwelt Mrs. Campbell of Succoth, mother of Lord-President Sir Islay Campbell. One Sunday evening Hume

slipped down from his rooms to take tea with the old lady, and found her surrounded by a group of pious elderly dames. The entrance of so notorious a 'heretic' created some dismay in the circle, but this transient feeling of horror was quickly dispelled by the pleasantness of his conversation. After the tea-things had been removed, Hume turned to his hostess and, without moving a muscle of his countenance, put to her the question, 'Well, Mrs. Campbell, where are the cards?' To this awkward question the poor lady could only answer, in words of truthfulness, no doubt, but of little effect, 'The cards, Mr. Hume! Surely you forget what day it is.' This meek reply did not induce her tormentor to drop the subject, for he continued with, 'Not at all, madam; you know we often have a quiet rubber on a Sunday evening.' The venerable dame tried in vain to induce him to withdraw this accusation, but he persisted in reiterating it, and at last she swept him away with the remark, 'Now, David, you'll just be pleased to walk out of my house, for you're not fit company in it to-night.'

The knowledge of his partiality for the game spread far and wide, and in all classes of life. One of the leaders of Scotch fashion, Lady Betty Hamilton, daughter of the Duke of Hamilton, and afterwards wife of the twelfth Earl of Derby, knew his weakness, and promised him, would he only consent to stay at her father's castle, to play with him at whist from morning to night. These were

no idle words. She brought a convincing proof of their sincerity. She was possessed with a genuine fondness for the game, and to gratify another illustrious Scot, Andrew Stuart, she played at whist 'from one at noon till one in the morning, without ever rising but for a few minutes to answer the calls of hunger.' Let us hope that Hume visited the Hamiltons, and that this fair suppliant was not carried away into commenting on his play. Under a criticism of his strategy at whist, David's philosophy gave way. This Mrs. Mure, wife of Baron Hume, experienced, and no wonder if, as we read, she 'was used to find fault with him *à tort et à travers*.' One night, when playing at Abbey Hill, the Baron's suburban villa near Holyrood House, the hostess and Hume got into a warm discussion on his play, and the philosopher lost control over his temper. He seized his hat, and, calling to his side the pretty Pomeranian dog that always accompanied him, with the words 'Come away, Foxey!' bounced out of the house in the middle of the rubber. The family intended to start the next morning for Caldwell, and 'David, who then lived in St. Andrew's Square, a good mile distant, was at the door before breakfast, hat in hand, with an apology.' So prompt a return to sanity, and such handsome regret for a momentary departure from politeness, enhance our affection for the cheerful philosopher ('Caldwell Papers,' i. 39).

The best whist-player at Glasgow a hundred and

twenty years ago—Mr. Robert Barclay, one of the chiefs of the Revenue Office—was desirous of trying conclusions with this philosophic expert. He sent to Edinburgh some details of a controversy on whist in which he was engaged with Dr. John Moore, the author of 'Zeluco,' and wished that they might be submitted for Hume's consideration, with whom he hoped some day to play a game or two. He chaffed the valiant David on his love of detecting 'latent heresy' and on his deep dealings 'in the history of kings,' and assured him with the utmost confidence that, would he but stop at Glasgow, they could 'produce a friend to convince him that, for all his high vogue, he is not quite at the head of the literati in this branch of history, though that is allowed to be his forte' ('Caldwell Papers,' iii. 198, 199).

Hume was not fond of money for money's sake. All that he wished was a cheerful independence; and this, the greatest source of happiness in life, he happily acquired. He tried to cure Strahan, the Queen's printer, of his indolence, with the assurance that, 'if it comes from riches,' he hoped to rid him of it by gaining his money at whist. When Hume, with the hand of Death fastening him in its iron grasp, travelled to London in the spring of 1776, in the company of John Home, they solaced the long journey with play at piquet, for 'Mr. David was very keen about his card-playing,' and liked to while away his time in this fashion, even amid the inconveniences of a post-chaise. Adam Smith, when

describing the last days of Hume, showed the presence of his 'ruling passion strong in death,' for the dying man 'would sometimes divert himself in the evening with a party at his favourite game of whist.'

It was on a strange incident, a curious interlude, in a game of whist, that David Hume gave utterance to a jest which had a long life of, say, seventy years, among the classes at the 'Modern Athens.' Four players, one of whom was a married lady, were engaged in a rubber of whist, when the lady was seized with the throes of labour upon 'very short notice,' and produced a girl child. Hume, who was one of the players, dubbed the little stranger the 'Parenthesis,' and by this playful appellation, as Sir Walter Scott records in a letter to his classical friend, Morritt, the lady was 'long distinguished' among her friends at Edinburgh.

The other ruler in literature at the Northern capital, the subtle Adam Smith, who sometimes condescended to take a hand at whist, was not considered 'an eligible partner' in the game. He knew its rules and practice, but could not entirely divest himself, when at the card-table, from the associations of the outer world, or from the thrall of political economy. 'If a new idea struck him'—such is the language of John Ramsay, the chronicler of Scotland and Scotchmen in the last century—'he either renounced or neglected to call.' Goldsmith was another player whose attention at whist was

not infrequently distracted by external circumstances. The incident which occurred at the house in Berners Street has been already mentioned. About 1769 he used to frequent the Grecian Coffee-house, then the favourite resort of the Irish Templars, and to entertain his friends—among whom was Robert Day, afterwards an Irish judge, who in 1831 communicated the details to Sir James Prior—without ostentation. Occasionally he would amuse them with a strain or two on the flute, and sometimes he would propose a game at whist. At neither of these diversions could he be considered a scientific expert, and at the last he was especially deficient in skill; but if he lost his money, he always retained full command over his temper. After a run 'of bad luck or worse play,' he would fling his cards upon the floor, but he never gave vent to a stronger expression than the whimsical words, 'Bye-fore George, I ought for ever to renounce thee, fickle, faithless Fortune!'

Gibbon's notion of life was not materially different from that of Judge Buller. His idea of happiness was to devote the morning to work and the afternoon to society and recreation, not 'disdaining the innocent amusement of a game of cards' in the interval between tea and supper. When at Lausanne in December, 1783, he described in a letter to Mrs. Porten the daily tenor of his life. The mornings were spent in study, and at half-past one he began to dress for a two-o'clock dinner. After this meal

and the departure of company, some amusing book or a game of chess whiled away an hour or two. The assemblies began between six and seven, and the only drawback was 'their number and variety.' Cards formed the chief means of relaxation, and whist at shillings or half-crowns was the game which he generally played, and, as Gibbon records, 'I play three rubbers with pleasure.' Between the hours of nine and ten came bread and cheese with a little conversation, and bedtime followed at eleven.

Now and then came a Communion Sunday, and that was indeed a day of agony. 'Where am I to spend my evening?' That was Gibbon's cry. If thoughts of business intruded into the mind of the Swiss on that day, the lips were closed against any mention of commerce. There was 'neither business nor parties,' and the culminating point was reached in the bitter cry, 'They interdict even whist on this day.'

Lever loved effect above everything, and his best remarks rather expressed the feeling of the moment than the definite conclusion derived from the experience of many years. At the close of his life he laid it down as an axiom, which required no evidence and could not be contradicted by reference to any eminent politician either of the past or the present, that 'to attain eminence as a statesman or politician he must be a good whist-player.' In proof of the correctness of his assertion, he cited a long string of illustrious names, from Fox and Metternich to

Cavour, and ignored the existence of the other men of distinction in politics who had not succumbed to the charms of the game. During the last century there certainly lived in England an abundant supply of politicians who might be seen night after night absorbed in this gay science. When Parliament was quiet—and a hundred and twenty years ago there were long stretches of repose in political life—they flocked to the clubs of St. James's Street or into social life. Even Barré forgot the thunders of invective, and settled down quietly to a rubber at Boodle's, whereupon Gibbon, observant of his presence, expressed the sarcastic regret that he would miss the usual exercise for his lungs.

Horne Tooke loved the charms of society, and was not impervious to the attractions, says his biographer, of 'the fair sex.' His detractors did not shrink from accusing him of being too fond of cards, and the same candid biographer could not deny the correctness of the accusation. They charged him with the crime of 'spending too much of his time at ombre, quadrille and whist'; and the only plea that could be urged in mitigation of the offence was that he never played for high stakes. A lady once asked Jack Wilkes to take a hand at whist, but Jack refused. Possibly because he thought that she paid but a poor compliment to the powers of conversation which distinguished him—possibly because he saw an opportunity for a telling sneer at the monarchs whom he then professed to hate.

At all events, he answered the request in the words, 'Dear lady, do not ask me, for I am so ignorant that I cannot distinguish the difference between a king and a knave.' The chronicler of this witticism thought it necessary to add, 'Here the republican tendency of his feelings is manifest.'

The least likely victims are often entangled in the fascinations of whist. It passes over many who seem destined to be enthralled by its mysterious charms, and lights on others with apparently little inclination to succumb to its beauties. Who would have suspected the philosophical Necker of yielding a prisoner to its attractions? But when in retirement at Coppet he never neglected an opportunity of playing after dinner with his friends and his daughter, Madame de Staël, and it is recorded of the great financier that he pursued it 'with eagerness and tenacity.'

To the race of diplomatists the first place in whist was assigned by Lever. They showed great recuperative power, and if some blemish did taint the whole flock, it was that they broke down when linked with bad partners. Lawyers, he allowed, usually played well. He could not deny them his meed of praise, involuntary though it might be, but he recovered his accustomed vein of cynicism when he thought of the physicians in practice at London and abroad. Among them were very, very few first-rate whist-players. They were behind the age in whist, and had not brought their knowledge of

the game down to its recent developments. Trumps were especially their weak point, and Lever launched in appropriate phraseology his sarcasm that 'they regard trumps as powerful stimulants, and only administer them in trump doses.' Their play was timid, and they played a 'disjointed' game, two of the worst faults, I may add, that the whist-player can possess.

The style of Prince Metternich had been carefully studied by Lever, and the conclusion was expressed in the phrase that he 'played well, but not brilliantly.' His game possessed the characteristics of his native land. 'It was patient, cautious back game, and never fully developed till the last card was played.' To use the language of the present age, the Prince could not 'stay.' Lever had remarked that 'he grew easily tired,' and he complained that Metternich 'very seldom could sit out more than twelve or fourteen rubbers.' This formed but a sorry contrast to the powers of his diplomatic rival in France, for 'Talleyrand always arose from table, after perhaps twelve hours' play, fresher and brighter than when he began.' Metternich knew his own weakness, and acknowledged the gifts required to make up the ideal player. He remarked 'that there was as much art in whist as in diplomacy.'

Talleyrand's name is for ever linked with the game of whist, and from its details some of his most pointed jests were drawn. Is not his mournful

prophecy to the young man ignorant of whist, on the old age that he would be doomed to drag out in unrelieved dulness, written on the heart of every player? Did he not, when playing at long whist one evening, drawl out, as he slowly counted his points, the well-known sarcasm on the old lady who had married her footman, 'At nine one does not count honours'?

A very pleasant company was gathered together in the Mediterranean elysium of Nice in 1825, and the chief of them was Talleyrand, attended by his niece, the Duchesse de Dino, afterwards the Duchesse de Sagan. His mode of life was very simple, and his habits were very regular. He would play his rubber until midnight; he would then begin to write his 'Memoirs,' and in their composition the hours would pass away until the clock struck three. He would then seek his repose, and would rise 'after a few hours' sleep fresh and ready for the occupations of the day.'

At Paris the wily old diplomate lived in the Rue St. Florentin, overlooking the gardens of the Tuileries. His table was the model of culinary perfection, and ten servants were kept regularly employed in the preparation of his daily dinner. When the Emperor of Russia came to Paris on Napoleon's abdication, Talleyrand seemed the arbiter of the destinies of the world, and the rooms in his house became the centre of the negotiations. The Provisional Government which he formed was com-

posed, with the sole exception of the Abbé de Montesquieu, of his associates at the whist-table (Chateaubriand, 'Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe,' iii. 265). His niece kept house and received the company for him, and Talleyrand down to 1837 used to sit down to the whist-table as long as the decencies of fashionable life would permit him, and when that period was passed he joined the rest of the party, being wheeled into the reception-room in his chair.

If practice could have made man perfect, Talleyrand should have been the greatest player of all time. With him there was whist every day of his life. He had probably, says Amédée Pichot in his 'Souvenirs Intimes,' spent more hours of his life in playing at whist than he had passed in diplomacy, or even in reading his breviary during the days that he was Abbé of Perigord or Bishop of Autun. Was he a genius at whist? This is the point on which the learned differ. Lever's words imply that he was. Another essayist and whist-player, Abraham Hayward, adopts a different view. In his eyes 'Talleyrand was far from a good player, and, as might have been anticipated, unduly prone to finessing and false cards.' Why, then, did he play?

Chateaubriand in his 'Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe' (vi. 202), implies that the cunning diplomatist did not occupy himself with whist through love of the game, but because he found it convenient to relapse into dumbness. During the three mute hours of the

evening that were occupied in whist he could shroud himself in silence. People wondered that a man of such capacity could stoop to the amusements of the many ; but who could say that, while arranging in his hand the four knaves, Talleyrand was not busying himself with thoughts of empires ? If such were his practice, the question is answered. Unless his whole attention were concentrated on the game, he could not attain to the first place among whist-experts, and the criticism of Hayward must be founded on justice. Pichot, while agreeing that whist was the amusement that Talleyrand loved best, allows that he was not always happy at the game, and that he was sometimes accused of trickery, through saying that it was not right to lose always. His own words give a show of colour to the insinuation of the jealous Chateaubriand, for he defended his love of the game in the terse expression, ' Le jeu occupe sans préoccuper et dispense de toute conversation suivie.'

The name of Lord William Manners, the shrewdest calculator and the most cunning tactician at the whist-table of the men then moving in society, is now forgotten, but the maxim to which he gave utterance is still, more than a century after his death, often quoted in card-rooms, and will probably survive for many a year to come. He laid it down as his experience—the result of a study of the game running over many years—that between one of the best and one of the worst whist-players there was

but a difference of five per cent. When the game was in its infancy, and its rules and leads were not yet fixed on an accurate basis, the conclusion may have been just, but in these days of scientific whist the difference must amount to a much greater figure, although Providence does always seem to compensate the inferior player for his want of knowledge and judgment by endowing him with an excessive wealth of cards.

The last Lord Chedworth (died October, 1804) was a whimsical character, in whom good and evil were mixed in about equal proportions. He neglected the duties of his high position as a peer and lord, but was mindful of his friends and compatriots. The result was that his relations endeavoured to prove him insane; and the chief legatee, a surgeon at Yarmouth, with whom he lived in retirement for many years, proved his sanity by the publication of his 'Notes on some of the Obscure Passages in Shakespeare's Plays.' Fox, 'the illustrious statesman and true patriot,' obtained under his will a legacy of £3,000; and as the eccentric peer was accustomed while at Ipswich to play whist with a Mr. Barney and his sister, he left him the sum of £4,000. Barney, a cheesemonger by trade, is appreciatively described as 'an intelligent and convivial man.'

Chedworth's legacy to Fox showed the nature of his political leanings. The tastes of Sackville, the ninth Earl of Thanet, are briefly set out by Sir Egerton Brydges in his edition of 'The Peerage of

Collins,' in the words that he 'has much addicted himself to agricultural pursuits, and in politics has supported the party of the late Mr. Fox.' It might have been added that he was equally 'addicted' to the game of whist. This devotion to Whiggism led to his imprisonment in the Tower in connection with the O'Connor riot. Three of his political sympathizers—the Duke of Bedford, the Duc de Laval, and a Captain Smith—were allowed to visit him and join him in a rubber of whist, and by the prison regulations the hour of their departure was fixed at eleven. Early in the sitting Smith fell in a fit of apoplexy, and one of them rose to call for help. 'Stop!' said another, and a more cold-blooded man; 'we shall be turned out if we make a noise. Let our friend alone until eleven. We will play dummy; and he will be none the worse, for I can read death in his face.' Let us hope that the other performers were more humane, and overruled this ghastly piece of advice.

The old Lord Hertford, a peer of different feelings in politics, was an inveterate whist-player. He noted the decline of whist among those who would, by reason of their rank, be admitted to his society, and its decay depressed his spirits. To his eager inquiry there came the invariable reply, 'I regret, my lord, that I cannot play the game.' The day came when he could no longer bear in silence this constant disappointment. In his agony he cried aloud, 'I really believe that the day is not

distant when no gentleman will have a vice that requires more than two people.'

Quickness of memory is the indispensable gift at whist. Without it every other accomplishment is rendered futile. The remarkable character of Porson's memory has been rendered all but proverbial. With him the difficulty was to forget, and his mind often retained what he would gladly have lost the knowledge of. It extended to trifles. One display of this characteristic filled Pryse Lockhart Gordon with surprise. He and some others were engaged in a game of whist, and some dispute occurred among the players. After the rubber had been played Porson went through the hand, and gave Gordon the names of every card that he had held. It was 'indeed a remarkable one.' In some astonishment and with some *naïveté* he goes on to remark, 'My own memory in such cases is pretty good.'

One of the most lovable men of the first half of this century was old Thomas Grenville. He could not be said, as Porson was, to carry the whole of the Bodleian Library in his pocket or his head, but throughout a life of ninety years he was a voracious book-collector. It was his boast that even when a lieutenant in the Guards he had at a book-sale snatched some *editio princeps* from the hands of the bench of bishops. Part of his means came through the profits of a sinecure office, and the remembrance of this fact induced him to leave his library to the

British Museum. His evenings were spent with his friends at his own house, 'a quiet dinner at four, and a game of whist afterwards, was the almost daily history of his later life.'

During the winters of 1845 and 1846 Sir Francis Doyle used to dine with him at his house in Hamilton Place, then the most delightful situation in London, once or twice a week, and to participate in his nightly rubber. He was his partner, only two days before his death, 'in the very last game that he played.' Up to that period, when playing at All Souls' College or in London, Doyle had usually won a trifle, but at Hamilton Place his persistent ill-luck filled the company with astonishment. The stakes were fortunately limited to a very small sum, to shillings, in fact, for they played for amusement and not for gain. Otherwise his position would have been 'embarrassing,' and as it was he lost thirty pounds in six or seven weeks, which to him 'was no trifle.' He could not attribute his reverses to bad play, for although his opponents may have been a trifle more skilful, the difference was but inconsiderable. 'A good many of these shillings went over from time to time to old Lord John Fitzroy,' who died in Half-Moon Street, off Piccadilly, on December 28, 1856.

Grenville was numbered among the especial patrons of honest Tom Payne, the mighty bookseller, whose shop at the Mews' gate was the rendezvous of bibliophiles like Cracherode and satirists like Mathias.

Honest Tom's tastes resembled those of his patron, and when his family invoked the artist's aid to hand down the recollection of his features to his descendants he was painted, not amid the solid books which crowded the shelves in his shop, but in the company of a 'sportive group of relatives and friends, and playing a game at whist.' The cards were represented in his left hand, and through an ebony pair of spectacles he was gazing intently and sharply at his opponent, who was completing his discomfiture by producing the ace of trumps (Dibdin's 'Bibl. Decameron,' iii. 435).

The greed of the cunning old Lord Chesterfield for playing at high stakes died away towards the close of his life. He was content then, in his retirement at Blackheath, to join 'every evening from seven till ten at a crown whist-party,' and he was animated by no other object than the laudable one 'to save his eyes from reading or writing for three hours by candle-light.' This was the motive that influenced many of these men, from Bishop Bathurst and Dean Vincent to the first Sir Robert Peel. They had spent their active years, their eyesight had become dimmed, and they now sought the least hurtful solace of their old age. Peel, the first Sir Robert, found his faculties 'more than usually alert' a few days before his death, and, to take advantage of the shining hour, invited three of his nephews to dine with him. As the repast went on, the old man asked if the champagne was good, and when 'told

that it was he drank a glass of it. The wine raised his spirits, and he conversed with much animation about past times.' Dinner was over, and whist was proposed. After a rubber or two the hand of the old man shook a little as he distributed the cards, and one of his nephews offered to deal for him. This mistaken kindness was too much for the old man. He resented it as much as the old Duke of Wellington used to object to an offer to help him on his horse. 'No, no, Robert,' he said; 'if I cannot deal my own cards, it is time to give up the game;' and he broke up the set. A few days later he died.

The pleasure of the philanthropic old George Peabody was of the same kind. When the business of the day was over, and an early dinner had been duly enjoyed, he settled down to a game of back-gammon, and, as the evening proceeded, to a rubber of whist. 'He was as fond of the latter,' says the organ of the cultivated people of Boston, 'and as rigorous a player as Sarah Battle.'

From youth to age the Comte d'Artois, as his original title ran, dabbled in cards. Swinburne, writing from Paris in 1786, when the shadow of the Revolution was already falling on the city, gave his Anglican friends the news that the Comte played deep at quinze and whist. He 'had lost much,' as might have been expected, at that period of his life, and through the magnitude of his reverses 'hazard is forbidden.' After many changes in the system of misgovernment in France, the evils of his brother's

reign were magnified in those of his own rule as Charles X. A revolution broke out in Paris; the King was in his palace at St. Cloud, and the members of his family sent repeated and frantic messages to him. 'His Majesty was playing whist! He was every inch a Bourbon. That rubber will remain among the sublimest examples of stately decorum in all the history of royal houses.' It has even been said that after the rubbers were over he withdrew to his bed, and that, although the revolutionary forces grew perceptibly stronger, the etiquette that hedges round a monarch forbade his being awakened. Raikes contradicts these stories, stating that Charles X. sat himself down at the card-table, but that his distractions prevented him from playing. But it appears from the 'Mémoires' of Madame de Gontaut that he did play, and that he played to show his ease of mind.

The Prince who rose to the throne of France on the flight of Charles X. was also a card-player. It was when engaged in a game at whist that he had to submit to 'an elegant insolence.' He dropped a louis on the carpet, and arrested the progress of the game to look for it, whereupon 'a foreign Ambassador, who was one of the party, set fire to a billet of 1,000 francs to give light to the King under the table.'

More changes came over the politics of France, and again a Napoleon was established on its throne. He, too, was a whist-player, and he played well. His training in whist had mostly been derived

from the players with whom he associated in England, and the house at which he played most frequently was Lord Eglinton's, but 'he never was the equal of that accomplished Earl, whose mastery of all games, especially that of address, was perfection.' At the Tuileries, during the earlier years of his régime, whist was a recognised institution, and among the visitors from England who joined in the game under the Emperor's hospitable roof was the Lord Clarendon who long held the seals of the English Foreign Office, and deservedly filled a high place in the ranks of our experts in whist.

Cavour was for many years the chief colleague of the third Napoleon in the politics of Europe, but when the unity of Italy was on the verge of becoming *un fait accompli* they parted company. The Italian Minister was consumed with a passion for whist. It dominated his whole being, and he could not live unless it formed a part of his daily food. His skill in the game was undoubted; if he had a fault, and it is less a fault at whist than in any other pursuit, he was 'too venturous, perhaps, too dashing,' but with a strong hand and when daring was required he was splendid. During all the sittings of the Paris Congress he never missed a night's attendance at the Jockey Club, and never had a greater run of good fortune. His gains were enormous; they were computed at more than £20,000. His action when fortune went against him has already been noted. He continued to play,

but lowered his stakes. Cavour founded the 'Société du Whist' at Turin. To a friend who talked of constant bad luck at the game, he said: 'C'est que vous n'avez pas assez de respect pour les petites cartes.'

Sir Horace Mann, who represented the borough of Sandwich for some time, and inherited a name long associated with residence as an English Minister at the Court of Tuscany, was famous both as a cricketer and a whist-player. The biographer of the Senators in the English Parliament (1808) describes him as a mighty cricketer, and as having 'been engaged in a multitude of whist-parties.' He was allowed by 'everyone to be acquainted with all the niceties of this enchanting game,' though in the matter of success he was beaten by one of the members of the city of Canterbury, probably Mr. John Baker.

The favourite Prime Minister of the youth of Queen Victoria, Lord Melbourne, was a conspicuous figure among the leading whist-players of his generation. He played well, and was an acceptable partner; but he sometimes failed to do justice to his own talents, for he had 'moments of distraction,' and during these intervals of aberration he suffered the smaller interests of politics to interfere with his combinations, and paid the penalty for this lack of restraint over his feelings. This is the testimony of Lever, a political opponent who, with the downright decisiveness which was his characteristic,

thought it becoming to add that he singled him out 'as a graceful compliment to a party who have numbered few good players in their ranks; for certainly the Tories could quote fully ten to one whisters against the Whigs.' A remark noteworthy from its complete disregard of the tone of the politics of the most eminent whist-players down to the middle of this century.

Melbourne's relations and political allies, Lord and Lady Ponsonby—he the Ambassador at Vienna and she the accomplished hostess of all English-speaking people of distinction who visited that city—made it a regular practice to indulge in one or two games of whist every evening, and they even softened the stern Sir Stratford Canning into accepting a hand with them. The son of Melbourne's colleague in the Ministry, and the father of the present Lord Lansdowne, was playing at whist in the drawing-room of White's early in July, 1866, when he suddenly dropped his cards on the table. They were picked up by Colonel Taylour, the Tory Whip, and restored to him. The peer played a minute or two longer, when he dropped them again, with the words, 'I feel very ill; will someone fetch me a cab?' One was obtained, and he was carried to his town house; but his illness was an incurable malady, and he died very soon afterwards.

On the opposite side of the House the whist-player of highest distinction in politics was Disraeli

the Second, afterwards Lord Beaconsfield. He loved the game, and inspired one of his characters in fiction with some admirable definitions of the manner in which an expert should handle his cards, but in practice his play fell short of perfection, and he had the sense to eschew high points. One evening—it was at the time that the country was divided on the question whether the Queen should be endowed with the title of Empress of India—he sat down to a rubber at whist with the Prince of Wales, and cautiously put the question, 'What points, sir?' 'Oh, sovereigns, if you please!' ran the answer; but this was more than the Tory Prime Minister liked, and a transient look of annoyance passed over his face. This was instantly perceived by Bernal Osborne, another of the party, who remarked, 'I think, sir, the Premier would rather have crown points;' and crown points they played.

In the Cabinet of Lord Derby there were several whist-players. The Premier himself played the game, but even his admirers could not allege that he had attained unto excellence in it. Another and a better performer, though still not in the front rank, was the youngest Bulwer, the first Lord Lytton. The brothers Bulwer inherited their love of cards from their grandmother. Whist and piquet were the games which the youngest brother 'relished and studied most, because in them the result depends more upon skill than luck.' On these games he

concentrated for a time his complete attention, 'and, from practice and aptitude combined,' soon took rank in London clubs as an 'exceedingly good whist-player,' even if he could not be admitted among the chosen few to whom the epithet of 'first-rate' could be applied. The application was not without its reward, for in a short time his winnings 'formed an appreciable addition to his income.'

Lord Lytton played at the Portland, endeavouring to devote his whole attention to the game, but playing 'without excitement or temper, and with extreme slowness.' It was a matter of constant observation that at every interval in the game he would rush off to an adjoining writing-table and engross himself, to all appearance with equal closeness of absorption, with some literary work until he was called upon to resume his seat at the table. There was another member of the club, a man devoid of offence, whose presence filled him with irritation. He firmly believed that this member brought him ill luck—was his *bête noire*, in fact—and never would sit down to the card-table while he was in the room. Ballantine was witness of an odd coincidence in connection with this belief. 'One afternoon, when Lord Lytton was playing, and had enjoyed an uninterrupted run of luck, it suddenly turned, upon which he exclaimed, "*I am sure that Mr. Townend has just come into the club!*" Some three minutes after, just time enough to ascend the stairs, in walked this unlucky personage. Lord

Lytton, as soon as the rubber was over, left the table, and did not renew play.'

The good fortune of his elder brother, Henry Bulwer, afterwards Lord Dalling, was even greater. In 1827 he was attached to the Berlin Embassy, and taking Paris in his way, won there between £6,000 and £7,000 at play. This fortunate haul proved, says Hayward, the starting-point of his diplomatic fortunes. It enabled him to join a whist-playing set, composed chiefly of the leading personages at the Court, which met at Prince Wittgenstein's. This illustrious functionary was the Grand Chamberlain, who dined daily with Frederick William III. of Prussia, and was his especial confidant in State secrets. A grand seigneur of the old school, he was at home on Thursdays and Sundays, when the ladies played loto and the gentlemen indulged in whist with such high stakes as 500 louis the rubber, until a hot supper was handed around the room without any pretence at formality. The chief members of the whist-set were Count Alopeus, the Russian Minister, General Nostitz, Bulwer, and the Duke of Cumberland, afterwards the King of Hanover. Henry Bulwer, though resembling his brother in falling short of the highest standard of play, 'eventually came off a winner; and, through this incidental intimacy with princes and ambassadors . . . learnt a good deal about important matters from which his official superiors were shut out; he also formed

connections of permanent value.' Moreover, it opened to him the principal resorts of the best whist-players in other Continental cities, where he often played with success, though not having a 'decided turn for the game at any time.'

In early youth Dr. Thomas Beddoes was consumed by an absorbing passion for the game of whist. He was accustomed when very young to anticipate, as one of the greatest pleasures of manhood, the power of sitting down uncontrolled and playing it all day long. During his residence at Oxford, about 1777, he was much in request as a master of the game, and his friends alleged, but the assertion must now be dismissed as a pardonable exaggeration on the part of his admirers, that he played it as well as almost any man in England. At this period of his life he was wont to amuse his friends 'by a surprising effort of memory. He would relate at the termination of a game the exact order in which all the cards were played, and particularize who had played them.' It is sad to read that a man capable of such an effort of memory seldom played after quitting the academic groves of Oxford; more especially as, when he did condescend to play, it was soon apparent that the old mastery over the cards had not deserted him.

The father of the Trollopes was a failure in life, and every expedient that he adopted to resuscitate his falling fortunes only made the situation worse. Fortunately for his own happiness, he was very fond

of whist, and, according to T. A. Trollope, was 'a good player.' It was, perhaps, fortunate for the preservation of the domestic peace that he enjoyed the game, as his devoted wife counted an evening lost that was not partly occupied with its practice. He was a good player, but people never voluntarily sat down at the card-table with him twice, and the reason for this disinclination was tersely expressed by an old friend. 'Many men,' he said, 'will scold their partners occasionally; but Trollope invariably scolds us all round with the utmost impartiality, and scolds us with every deal.'

The great physician, Sir Astley Cooper, when out of London on business or pleasure, used to while away the long hours of the evening by a rubber at whist, but he was not happy unless the game was limited to shilling points. One night, when staying at Hatfield, he was requested by the then Lady Salisbury to join in a game. He consented to take a hand, and as she was known to be a player of great skill, put forth all his power of attention and deduction to prove himself not unworthy of joining in the set. In spite of all his endeavours, the game went against him, and he lost seven points. Sir Astley put his hand into his pocket to pay the seven shillings which he thought that he had lost, and was much disconcerted at finding that the points were half-guineas, and that he had lost three guineas and a half. He declined to play a second rubber, pleading that he must have played badly, and would not

alter his determination, though he was told by the hostess that the loss of the game was not due to any fault on his part.

Sir Astley was a man of gravity, and played his game with the silence that is its due; but Douglas Jerrold, who sometimes played, and played well, would disturb the equanimity of those at the table with him by a perpetual concourse of jokes and stories, so that players and bystanders alike were dissolved in laughter, and the discomfiture was complete of those whose memory was at all faulty. His friend, Charles Dickens, condescended to indulge in a rubber, and always expressed great fondness for the game.

Hallam, when recruiting his health at Tunbridge Wells in the autumn of 1831, tried to disperse the prejudices of Samuel Rogers against that town and its life. It was 'excellent wintering. We have a very small society of people we like, and play six-penny whist, when it might be dull else, not otherwise.' Lord Houghton used occasionally to play a rubber or two after dinner, and Buckle, though exceedingly fond of chess, would not infrequently pass an hour or two in the amusement of whist. It was a constant remark of his that he played whist better than chess. Albany Fonblanque was a whist-player, and a very ardent player, in early manhood. In 1820 he wrote from Brighton: 'My business here is whist. If I cannot get whist—and Providence is very good to me, and seldom denies me its rubbers—

I resort to piquet; if piquet is not to be had, to écarté.' As years rolled on, whist gave place in his affections to chess, but he never altogether abandoned his first love. Towards the close of his days his 'tall, attenuated figure and colourless face' were still conspicuous on the cliff and esplanade of Brighton, and in the evening he frequently attended the whist séances in the chess club ('Waifs and Strays,' by Captain Hugh A. Kennedy, pp. 185, 186).

Another man of letters, Washington Irving, used to play his whist regularly. In his declining years he could not sleep o' nights unless he played whist in the evening. It kept him from injuring his eyes through reading by artificial light or from murdering his night's rest by a premature doze. Irving was always 'a very poor player at whist, and cared nothing for the game'; but he gladly seized on it to keep himself awake in the evening, and not to destroy his chance of slumber during the night. One night, in the month before his death, he disclaimed all desire of pretension, but could not refrain from calling himself 'the very worst player that ever was.' The day before his death—it was Sunday, November 27, 1859—he remarked that he required 'some religious game' to prevent him from falling asleep. A thought struck him, and he added: 'I shall have to get a dispensation from Dr. Creighton to allow me to play whist on Sunday evening.'

The question of the lawfulness of playing cards on Sundays has been often debated. Abraham de la Pryme, in his diary of the local occurrences at Hull and its neighbourhood in the closing decades of the seventeenth century, gives an odd anecdote about an army of some 'six or seven thousand Dains' who were landed at that seaport at the end of 1688. They were, no doubt, honest and industrious people, who brought some novel modes of labour to this country, but they did not hold it a sin to play cards on a Sunday. Their practice coincided with their belief, but this was more than the people with whom they mixed could endure. The natives of Hull rose in their wrath and 'took the cards from them.' Southey, when composing the letters from England which he published as the work of 'Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella,' commented, in his disguise of a foreign writer, on this prejudice of the English. The volumes purported to have been translated from the Spanish, and were, therefore, composed as the observations of a stranger on the details of national life in England which would most amuse and astonish his fellow-countrymen in the Peninsula. 'A general and unaccountable prejudice prevails' against the use of cards on Sundays, and he went on to add the expression of his belief that 'half the people of England think it the very essence of Sabbath-breaking.'

Many years ago a young Scot, who was travelling in his father's business, made the acquaintance of

the father, then manager of the theatre at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, of the celebrated Macready. The theatrical manager invited the youth to sup with him at his lodgings on a Sunday, the only day on which he could entertain his friends in comfort. The lad went 'without muckle scruple,' and found eight or nine other guests, who 'drank, smoked and talked.' A game of whist was proposed, but this for awhile outraged all his national feelings. 'I thought I wud gang awa', but I did na. I just lookit on, and wondered a wee at the wickedness around me.' He confessed to a full share of gin and water, but he 'was na fou nor near it, though I might, as Burns says, *have had just a wee drap in my ee.*' One of the company was playing so badly and losing so much money that at the conclusion of the rubber he declined to continue at the game. The youngster stepped into the vacant seat, 'forgot a' about the Sabbath, and before a' was done had cleared close upon £17 by the night's work.' In spite of this deviation from Scotch rectitude, he lived to be Provost of Glasgow and to tell the anecdote to the younger Macready (Charles Mackay, 'Forty Years' Recollections,' pp. 339, 340).

Some people will find a corrective to this reminiscence in the story which Mr. James Payn assigns to Robert Southey. A party of 'respectable persons' on quitting the opera-house one Saturday night repaired to Mrs. Sturt's to play faro. The game proceeded for a short time, when a 'thunder-

clap and a slight shock of an earthquake' momentarily disturbed the equanimity of the company. They played on, when 'the clubs became the colour of blood and the hearts black.' That proved too much even for such hardened sinners, and they abandoned their game.

An American man of letters worthy of being mentioned in the same category with Washington Irving, and like him a close but discriminating critic of English life and manners, was Nathaniel Hawthorne. His enthusiasm for whist began in college days, and for many years it afforded him infinite pleasure, particularly in contemplating 'the turns of fortune' involved in the game. When at Rome in 1858-59, all the family played cards, and the head of the house proved an incomparable companion, so that everyone wanted to be his partner. He was 'charming in victory,' and supreme in the calmness with which he suffered defeat. It was delightful to see him win the odd trick, and to watch his happiness in winning, but the 'only stakes were the honour of victory.' His eldest daughter caught the Roman malaria, and seemed to be passing into absolute hopelessness of life. Hawthorne forced himself to play his usual game of whist, but the old mirth was gone. He played silently and gloomily. At last he broke down. Only one hand of the game was played; it was suspended, and never ended.

Wherever Charles Lever went, his invariable

amusement was whist, and he played it with marvellous enthusiasm. While dwelling at Templeogue, near Dublin, the play lasted long and ran high. So fond of the game was the host, that he once played all night at a hotel in Kingstown, intending to leave Ireland by the morning boat; but the infinite variety of the game, and possibly the hope of winning back some of his losses—for he was always an unlucky player—chained him to his seat, and he let the boat go without him. He continued to play all that day, 'until the rapidly-tolled bell of the evening boat led him at last to desist and run.'

Among his card-associates at this time were 'a peer, a judge, and a F.T.C.D.' The last of the party was probably the Trinity Don, who was forced by his office to undertake the duties of a public examination at the University on the morning of the day when he had passed nearly the whole of the previous night in playing whist with Lever. He had barely time on arriving at Trinity 'to slip on his gown and hasten into the Hall, where, seating himself, tired and sleepy, in his armchair, he exclaimed, in the midst of a perfect silence, 'Let us play.'

The peer was Lord Muskerry, the third baron, who was staying with his father-in-law, Henry Deane Grady, in Merrion Square. When the jolting car from Templeogue at last deposited its burden at the right house, the door was opened by Lady Muskerry in her night-dress, who, without a moment's delay,

pitched into her lord and master in a torrent of vehement expressions.

The judge was probably Bushe. Another member of the set was a Dr. Walsh, 'who wrote about Servia'—no doubt the Rev. Robert Walsh, LL.D., who was chaplain to the British Embassy at Constantinople, and described the conditions of residence in that city. It was after a night spent in the society of these hardened desperadoes at whist that the cars, when summoned early in the morning to carry home the roisterers, for whom they had long been waiting, were found so tightly locked together that a smith had to be called to get them asunder.

In August, 1847, a resting-place at Florence was found by the restless Lever, and there he used to lounge into either the Jockey Club or Il Casino dei Nobili, 'picking up character or playing whist.' But foreign clubs were little to his taste; he considered them, and correctly, as little more than gambling-places. At the receptions of the Grand-Duke he never lost an opportunity of indulging in his favourite pastime; but he would not play with Mrs. Trollope. While in Florence he and his friends used to play on the Continental system with each other in turn, and not cutting for partners.

Lever rarely won. On returning to Great Britain about 1870, for a time he lost heavily while in London; and when he proceeded to Dublin, though

he won something on a few nights, he lost much more on many others. When Sir Henry James visited Trieste in 1871, he noted that Lever's chief pleasure was 'in playing whist.' It is pleasant to read that, in spite of all his losses at cards, his family was not unprovided for.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COMBINATIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS AT CARDS.

All the newcomers at Monte Carlo, and some of those who have yielded to its temptations year after year, enter upon a course of play at the tables in the belief that they have invented an infallible 'system' for winning. Sometimes a disastrous course of ill-luck at the outset of their operations breaks down their expectations of success, and they retire to investigate the reason for the failure of their strategy. At others a run of good fortune at the start lures them with the transient belief that they have found 'the philosopher's stone,' and will be able to retire from the scene in the course of a month or two with the handsome fortune that is the legitimate reward of the scheme that they have planned upon such firm foundations, and with such an unerring certainty of success. Sooner or later comes the inevitable run in favour of the bank, and the gamblers, who have been successful for a time, withdraw 'cleaned out' of all their winnings.

The whist-player, even the skilled expert in the game, is not so easily deluded. He knows that the tide of misfortune often runs heavily against all his combinations, and the saying often mounts to his lips, that 'cards will beat their makers.' The extent of the difference at whist between the good player and the bad has not been definitely settled by authority. In the last century, as on a previous page has already been noted, one of the leading players of his era, Lord William Manners, put the odds at no more than five per cent. This was, however, in a pre-scientific age, before the principles of the game had been rationally discussed and the ingenious minds that have been studying its infinite variety of detail for nearly half a century had formulated the results of their investigations. The only recognised conclusion is that the worse a man plays the better are the cards that are bestowed upon him by fortune. In cards, as in life, Providence waits upon the fool.

It has been more than once suggested that this preponderance of luck, which seems nearly always to act in favour of the 'duffer,' might be diminished by a reduction of the existing mode of counting honours. Where four by honours are reckoned now, only two should be allowed, and where two are allowed at the present time, only one should be permitted. This, such is the contention of many writers, and notably of a Mr. A. Stuart in *Temple Bar* for September, 1890, would increase the chances

of good players, and deal havoc with the 'whist-spoilers' who abound in most clubs.

A small bookshelf can be filled with the volumes which have been written on the doctrine of chances, and to many minds the problems which they present are imbued with a special power of fascination. A work by Dr. Arbuthnot—in the Bodleian Library printed catalogue it is attributed to Dr. John Arbuthnot—on 'The Laws of Chance,' which was published in 1692, contains two problems on the situation of honours at 'whisk.' The names of the most famous contributors to the elucidation of the doctrine, James Bernouilli and Abraham de Moivre, are of European reputation. In our country there have appeared several treatises on this subject, the best known of all being that by Hoyle. One, the composition of an unknown W. Painter in 1787, was entitled, 'A Guide to the Lottery and the Laws of Chance.' A second, by William Rouse, of Haskerton, near Woodbridge, in Suffolk, and of the rather more recent date of 1814, purports to be 'The Theory of Gaming made easy to Every Person.' About half a century ago a few calculations were given by Reuben Roy—the name seems to suggest that it was invented as a cloak—in his 'Bridgwater Treatise on Whist, embracing Calculations on that Universal Game from the Egerton MSS., with Notices of Short Whist, French Whist.' The same name also appears on the title-page of several little handbooks on quadrille, piquet,

billiards, and other games. The doctrine of probabilities has been within the last decade very fully illustrated in William Allen Whitworth's 'Choice and Chance'; and to the fourth edition, which he issued in 1886, was appended a stock of illustrations 'drawn from the game of whist.' Further information on the same topic may be found in Proctor's 'Chance and Luck,' and in the treatise of Dr. Pole. The subject is enticing, but the practical whist-player will find it prudent to ignore such treatises until constant play shall have made him thoroughly conversant with the rules and rudiments of the game.

In a very entertaining volume, with the taking title of 'Whist or Bumblepuppy,' which is familiar to most whist-lovers, and prized by them for its practical wisdom at its weight in gold, the learned author favours the world with some of his experiences in good and bad hands. He has won seventeen successive rubbers more than once. 'I have lost nine hundred and thirty points in two months, and a hundred and fifty-four in two days. I have lost a bumper in two deals, holding one trump each hand, and with the same partner, the same seats, and the same cards won the next rubber but one in two deals, again holding one trump in each hand.'

'I have held,' says Pembridge, the *nom de guerre* of the medical man who wrote this amusing brochure, 'three Yarboroughs in two hours (a Yarborough is a hand containing no card above a nine), and a hand with no card above a seven at least twice. With

ace, knave to five trumps, two kings in other suits, and trumps led up to me, I have lost five by cards; and with queen, knave, ten, eight, three, and two diamonds (trumps), king of spades, ace and king of hearts, ace, king, queen, and another club, and the original lead, I lost the odd trick.'

Similar instances of protracted runs of luck, good and bad, are recorded in the books on whist, or have come under our personal observation. It is chronicled in the pages of *Knowledge* for July 24, 1885, that one of the finest whist-players living 'lost twenty-three rubbers in succession, though most of the time he had an excellent partner.' In some amusing reminiscences on whist by a Meltonian, which were printed in George Walker's journal called the *Philidorian*, mention is made of a first-rate player, the best in the room, who on one night played thirty rubbers at four different tables, and lost twenty-seven of them. Henry Greville, younger brother of Charles Greville, Clerk to the Privy Council, and, like him, a diarist of the events that interested him, dabbled in whist and noted in his journal the 'remarkable fact that this evening (October 31, 1850, when on a visit to Norman Court) I played ten rubbers of whist and lost them all, and, moreover, never once cut to win the deal. In all I have lost since I came here one hundred and ninety-seven points.' A bright little article on the gay science by 'One Who Wins' was inserted in *Temple Bar* for April, 1891, and the writer seems to be justified by

his good-fortune in his choice of his disguise. One day he and his partner, with two up, scored nine tricks, and so won the game without their opponents being able to arrest their progress. Ranged against them were six trumps, with the ace, king, queen, knave, ten at their head. He, the winning man, had four small trumps, and his partner three, and they made two ruffs.

At Malvern in March, 1893, one of the players had a single trump five times in one rubber, and at the same place in the following autumn I had four single trumps in five consecutive hands. In August, 1891, a Colonel playing at the Baldwin Club took up in five rubbers no less than seven hands without any trumps. On the other hand, fortune presented me once in the card-room of the Malvern Club with eight trumps, and the ace, king, queen at their head, and in seven days' play in that hospitable room I was one summer lucky enough to assist in scoring three slams. The gossip of the room records that its chief player one afternoon received eight trumps, headed by the ace and queen, and yet lost three by cards, for he found on leading them that the rest of the suit was with one of his opponents, and that they had all the other good cards.

An amusing coincidence occurred once in play at the Reform Club. I was associated in partnership with a player of good reputation in the game, and of an evenness of temper that no disaster could impair. Fortune gave him but one trump, a nine.

During the course of the next deal I remarked to my partner, 'P., that trump of yours was good as a joke for once, but it must not occur again.' We took up our cards. I had no trump at all, and he again had but one trump, and that again was a nine. Such a disastrous share of ill-fortune put an end to the rubber and our partnership. I cut out, but P. remained in. The first hand of the new combination is dealt. Again, and for the third time in succession, P. receives but one trump, a nine.

In the course of 1888 public opinion was exercised over the fact that during some play at the United Service Club, Calcutta, on February 9 in that year, when three doctors and a judge, Mr. Justice Norris, were seated at the table, and a new pack of cards was being dealt, the whole thirteen trumps fell to the lot of the dealer. Elaborate calculations were at once made and inserted in the newspapers as to the chances of such a combination of cards ever occurring, and it was demonstrated that it could only happen once in an alarming number of millions of hands. No sooner was this information communicated to the world than a number of whist-players wrote to allege that it had happened to them on previous occasions. It came out in a communication to the *Times* of February 20, 1888, from Mr. Charles Mossop, that such an incident had been noted during February, 1863, in *Bell's Life*, that a similar occurrence had been chronicled in the *Westminster Papers* for December, 1873, of which he was

then the editor, and that it was again recorded in the *Daily Telegraph* in April, 1869. Numerous other instances were noticed. Sir Edgar MacCulloch's father, when playing at Penzance a century ago, held all the trumps (*Notes and Queries*, series 7, vol. v., 397). One player, who had been so blessed, wrote that for a joke he led the two of trumps. If such were the case, he must have secured the lead by trumping with a higher card—perhaps, as the taller the card the better the joke, by trumping with the ace. Another said that as he had the whole thirteen trumps in his own hand he was obliged, much to the indignation of his partner, to trump his ace in another suit. The English lady at Naples who found the whole thirteen trumps in her hand, and was terror-stricken at the sight, through a morbid fear lest she should be accused of cheating, has been commemorated on a previous page.

During the last few years some other odd divisions of cards have been described in the daily papers. One night in October, 1888, when four resident medical officers were playing at whist in Westminster Hospital, two of them had all the red, and their opponents all the black cards. The same whimsical event happened in the smoking saloon of the Royal Mail steamer *Potosi* during her voyage from Plymouth to Sydney in June, 1882, and it occurred during a rubber in which 'Cuthbert Bede' was one of the players. It is recorded in the pages of *Notes and Queries* for

December 20, 1862, that four whist-players, in drawing cards for partners, each drew an ace. The gentleman who communicated this fact added that if they were to play again every night, with the exception of Sundays, the same result would not recur, according to the doctrine of probabilities, until their lives had been protracted to the span of nine hundred years.

Instances are not uncommon of all the trumps coming to the dealer and his partner. The sprightly Dr. Warner, writing to his patron, George Augustus Selwyn, on September 24, 1799, lights up for us one such occurrence. 'Ay, sir! that game of whist of an evening and its events is a vast thing,' such is the prelude to his story. 'Last night, by a lucky deal, I gave myself eight trumps, and my partner the other five. I won the first trick and led a trump, when, upon my adversary on the left renouncing, his partner—a grave divine with a large black wig and a solemn face, with a pipe stuck in it—gave, with an impetuosity which made him drop his said pipe that had been newly lighted, a "What!" of such sharp, shrill astonishment that you could not but have laughed at it if present, and have remembered it in future.'

All of these hands have been dealt in fair play. There attaches to them not the shadow of a suspicion. They have come to the players naturally, and without any arrangement. But it is possible to manipulate the cards in such a way that they can be dealt

according to the fancy of the distributer. A comic situation of this kind is painted for us by Mr. Thorpe in his volume of 'Still Life.' The whist-table at Douglas, in the Isle of Man, was presided over by one Colonel Higgins, K.H., and among the visitors who sat down to it one autumn about 1848 was Mr. Thorpe, then an undergraduate spending his long vacation in Mona, and full of the vitality that attends on such a period in life. Mr. Thorpe, according to his own confession, 'dreadfully upset on two occasions this military martinet. The first of them was the result of a simple manœuvre, by which the cards can be made to deal out in perfect suits. With the help of a friend I effected this, and the Colonel's fury nearly brought on a fit of apoplexy. How it would have been had he got all the trumps I cannot say, but of course one of the conspirators had dealt.'

The phrases current in card-life have come down to us from our ancestors, and will pass on with undiminished vigour to our descendants. They are endowed for the most part with wondrous vitality, and their life seems to be perennial. Occasionally, however, one of them slips out of knowledge, and passes into the limbo of forgetfulness. In the early part of this century, when fortune blessed any player with cards of overwhelming strength, he was said to be possessed of a 'Jeroboam' hand. The word nowadays is never mentioned in a card-room, not even among 'superfluous veterans.' Some inquiring spirit—his own knowledge ought to have suggested

the explanation—asked, in the pages of *Notes and Queries*, for the meaning of the expression, and an answer was promptly given by F. C. H., initials which veiled but imperfectly the identity of an accomplished divine of the Roman Catholic Church. He at once reminded the readers of that delightful periodical of the phrase, which used to be not uncommon in combination-rooms of colleges, a 'Jeroboam' of claret, and explained that the sense of magnitude which the phrase conveyed was derived from the division of the tribes when Jeroboam obtained 'ten of the tribes of Israel, and his rival was left with only two.'

What a 'Jeroboam' hand the Duke of Cumberland must have held in the public rooms at Bath! On the strength of the cards he arranged a bet, so runs the story, for £20,000, but he was easily beaten, and did not win a trick. The cards in his possession were 'king, knave, nine and seven of trumps (clubs); ace and king, diamonds; ace, king, queen and knave, hearts; ace, king and queen, spades.' His partner's hand did not contain a single card of any value.

The Duke's right-hand adversary held five small trumps, and the other eight cards in his hand consisted entirely of hearts and spades. To his left-hand opponent there fell ace, queen, ten and eight in trumps, and queen, knave, ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four in diamonds. The Duke led a small trump which his left-hand antagonist won, and returned by a lead of diamonds. The earliest

authority for this hand which I have succeeded in lighting upon is a Liverpool paper called the *Kaleidoscope*, and it was printed in the issue for February 4, 1823. Its authenticity is not without doubt.

One or two of the best-known players of the present day, men who are content with small stakes and do not hanker after bets, have kept a record of their proceedings at the whist-table. The result may be accepted as a proof of the evenness with which good and bad cards are distributed, when the results of a series of years are taken into consideration. 'Cavendish,' in the winter of 1875, paid a short visit to the charming cottage of Mortimer Collins, at Knowl Hill, and, as out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh, it is on record in the diary of Collins that 'he never learnt so much about cards in so short a time.' The visitor, this 'famous whist-player,' imparted to his host the total of his rubbers and his gains during the previous ten years. He had played 20,000 rubbers and won about £2,000. The result of 'Cavendish's' play, from January, 1860, to December, 1878, has been given elsewhere in specific figures. During that period, nineteen complete years, he won 15,648 and lost 15,020 rubbers, while in points his gains were 85,486 and his losses 81,055, 'or as nearly as possible one-seventh of a point a rubber.'

Almost equally conspicuous in the ranks of the whist-players of the present day is Mr. James Payn,

the novelist and critic. Ten years ago, when he was committing to paper some of the literary recollections which had been associated with his life, he confessed that for the previous thirty years he had played regularly at the 'noble game of whist for two or three hours a day.' This has been his daily solace for the arduous and exacting duties in literature which he has discharged during the last forty years and more, and I have heard from others that the whole of his gains, although his skill is above doubt and his good fortune impossible of question, have not amounted, during that long period, to an average of £100 per annum. Some interesting statistics, the result of twenty-four years' play, are chronicled by Dr. Pole in the *Field* for December 23, 1893. In that time he played 20,000 rubbers and won a balance of 526 rubbers, or 3,104 points, the mean value of each rubber coming out at 5·414. This was a good result, and was attributed by him to the fact that he always adhered to the modern system of play as promulgated to the world at large by 'Cavendish,' Clay and himself. His gains were much greater in the earlier years than in the later, and this, he concluded, was due to the fact that in the more recent period that system was more frequently adopted by the players whom he encountered. If anyone contemplates entering upon such a course of life in the hope of pecuniary advantage, he may well ask, with Mortimer Collins, Is the game worth the candle?

Cards used to be called in England 'the books of the four kings.' The best-known instance is that said to be used by Mrs. Piozzi in 'Retrospection,' where she remarks that it is a 'well-known vulgarity in England to say, "Come, sir, will you have a stroke at the history of the four kings?"' a phrase which was equivalent to asking the gentleman in question to take a hand at some game of cards. By older writers several names were employed to designate a pack of cards, as it is now all but universally called. Sometimes it was a pair of cards, at others a deck, and occasionally a stock. Sir Walter Scott is noted by Lockhart (ed. 1845, p. 509) to have used the 'antiquated expression' that there was a 'pair' of cards in his house. Shakespeare used the word 'deck' in the play of 'Henry VI.,' Part III., act v., scene 1, where the line, 'The king was slyly finger'd from the deck,' seems to be the embodiment of an ancient proverb. Several instances of the employment of the same word in other plays of the Elizabethan period are quoted by the commentators. Ritson adds that an instance occurred in the Sessions Paper for June, 1788, and Steevens was informed that the word was still current in his day in Ireland. This was not one of the provoking jests of that Puck among commentators, for the Irish song quoted in *Notes and Queries*, series 1, vol. ii., 405, speaks of

> 'De deck being called for, dey play'd
> Till Larry found one of dem cheated.'

A few persons who are fond of airing their learning still designate the picture cards in the pack by the expression 'coat,' instead of 'court' cards. The phrase 'coat' cards is used by Sir John Harington in his 'Metamorphosis of Ajax,' by Ben Jonson in his 'Staple of News,' and by many other writers. But in the course of time the phrase 'court cards,' though possibly incorrect, has become embedded in the English language, and cannot now be removed.

The superstitions of the whist-player are beyond enumeration. They acquire a mysterious hold over his imagination, and baffle every attempt to secure their expulsion. Some of them are to be found in every district of England, from the clubs of London to the remotest ends of local life in the provinces, and others are confined to particular towns or counties. In Northumberland the four of hearts used sometimes to be called by the name of 'Hob Collingwood,' and by the ancient dames, who form so large a section of card life in the provinces, it was considered an unlucky card to be found in the hand. The four of clubs is universally known as the devil's bed-post. It, too, is an unlucky card, and the dealer who turns it up is always considered as cut off from all chance of winning the game. In certain parts of our Midland shires it came to be known as 'Ned Stokes,' and the following explanation of this name, which the reader can accept or dismiss as his reasoning impels him, was given in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1798, Part II.,

p. 583. A certain parson, the Rev. Edward Stokes, of Blaby, in Leicestershire, had four sons, two of whom he was in the habit of saying he had given to God and two to the devil, by which elegant expression he meant that two were clergymen and two were attorneys. One of the latter, Edward Stokes, of Melton Mowbray, was a good whist-player, and known throughout the country as a desirable partner in the game, but he had conceived a ridiculous aversion to the four of clubs, which never failed to show itself on the appearance of that card. Hence it came to be known by the playful title of 'Ned Stokes.'

The deuce of spades, when turned up as the trump card, is to be tapped for luck, and the deuce of clubs is a sign of five trumps in the dealer's hand. In many parts each black deuce, whether in spades or clubs, is always tapped for good fortune, and the adage runs, 'There's luck under a black deuce.' There is one possible exception to this proverb: you must take care not to touch it with your elbow. While the deuce is considered the most fortunate of cards, the next to it in increasing order is under a ban. 'There's luck in the deuce, but none in the tray' is the cry of the superstitious. A bit of a hangman's rope is held by some gamesters to be a charm for success at cards. The cynic in *Notes and Queries*, February 29, 1868, p. 193, added, 'Gambling is like enough to furnish the ropes.'

In Kilkenny, according to the historian of the

Grace family, one of that race long gave his name to a particular card in the pack. The incident is of a melodramatic character, and redounds, if true, to the credit of the family's patriotism. John Grace, Baron of Courtstown, one of the chief men of Kilkenny county, raised in 1689 a regiment of foot and a troop of horse at his own expense for King James. One of the Duke of Schomberg's emissaries endeavoured to seduce him to the side of the Dutch usurper, but the brave Jacobite, seizing a card which lay near him on the table, returned on it a spirited refusal couched in the heroics of his country. The card which he sent 'open' by the bearer of the rejected offer was 'the six of hearts,' and it was afterwards generally known in the city as 'Grace's card.'

Another card possesses a distinctive nickname in Ireland. This is the ace of diamonds, which is known as the 'Earl of Cork,' and the odd reason which has been given for this appellation is that 'it is the worst ace and the poorest card in the pack, and he is the poorest nobleman in the country.'

The volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine* during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century are full of these forgotten beliefs. Among card-players throughout England the ten in trumps is still called the fifth honour. A century ago (*ibid.*, 1791, Part I., p. 16) it was dubbed 'the Welsh honour,' an expression which may be taken, according to the desire of the reader, as a compliment or an insult to

that 'gallant little' principality. In many parts of Yorkshire the suit of diamonds used to be designated as 'Picks,' and in Lincolnshire the queen of clubs received the illustrious title of 'Queen Bess,' because the Virgin Queen 'was of a swarthy complexion.'

Wherever cards are known, there the 'nine of diamonds' is called 'the curse of Scotland.' The meaning of the term has vexed both antiquary and philologer, from Sir Walter Scott, who corresponded with Constable on this subject in 1823, to Dr. Murray, who not long ago sought in *Notes and Queries* for an explanation of its meaning to insert in his magnificent dictionary of English words. A whole sheaf of suggestions as to its origin have been made, but not one of them is of such obvious propriety as to secure general adoption.

One suggestion (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1786, Part I., p. 301) was that 'nine diamonds or lozenges conjoined' were the arms of the family of Packer, and that Colonel Packer, one of those present on the scaffold when Charles I. was beheaded, had afterwards commanded in Scotland, and acted with considerable severity to those under his power. Hence the nine of diamonds might have been associated with his name as the curse of Scotland.

A second writer (*ibid.*, Part I., p. 391) explained the term by a reference to the arms of Dalrymple, Lord Stair, which are nine lozenges on a saltire, the number and shape of the spots being identical, and their arrangement sufficiently similar. Sir James

Dalrymple, first Earl of Stair, was the object of much execration, especially from the adherents of the Stuarts, for his share in the massacre of Glencoe in 1692, and for the part which he played in bringing about the Union with England.

A third suggestion was (*ibid.*, Part II., p. 538) that the Duke of York when in Scotland introduced into society 'a new game called Comet, where the nine of diamonds is an important card,' and that as many of the lairds learnt its mysteries to their pecuniary cost, they called it their curse.

A fourth writer (*ibid.*, Part II., p. 968) also attributed this designation of the nine of diamonds to the fact that it was 'the great winning card at Comette,' but assigned its introduction into Scotia to 'the French attendants of Mary of Lorraine, Queen of James V.,' by which measure 'many Scotish families' were reduced to ruin.

The spirit of conjecture was not yet dead. It was now remarked (*ibid.*, 1787, Part I., p. 130) that at the game of Pope Joan the nine of diamonds is pope. The conclusion is inevitable—that, as every genuine Scotchman hates the Pope as the curse of Christendom, the nine of diamonds, which embodies the national antipathy, must be the 'curse of Scotland.'

A sixth hypothesis is now presented. A gentleman of high degree (*ibid.*, 1788, Part II., p. 731) had heard the servants in his father's kitchen call the nine of diamonds by the odious appellations of

'Moll Hepburne, or the Curse of Scotland.' Could it be that the title was intended for Mary Stuart, who married as her third husband James Hepburne, Earl of Bothwell?

A seventh scribe now came forward (*ibid.*, 1789, Part I., p. 39). He understood the phrase as an allusion to nine Kings of Scotland who reigned tyrannically. Diamonds are the cards 'most emblematical of royalty,' and the appearance of the nine of that suit always revived the idea of the nine tyrants. The suggestion of Grose was not unlike this, as he traced it to the fact of 'every ninth King of Scotland being a curse to the country'; but he went on to add that some students of proverbial phrases derived its origin from a similarity to the arms of Argyll, one of the chief promoters of the Union.

The most frequent explanation is that the Duke of Cumberland used the back of the nine of diamonds as the means of communicating his order for the massacre of the wounded insurgents after their defeat at Culloden. There is, however, abundant evidence that the card in question was so called before that date. A writer in *Notes and Queries* for May 27, 1893, while allowing this, contended that the Duke did write his order on its back, and asserted on good authority that 'the identical card is preserved at Slains Castle, Aberdeenshire, the seat of Lord Errol.' The value of this statement was, however, destroyed by a subsequent com-

munication to the effect that the only card preserved in the castle was the eight of diamonds, with a note on the back having no reference to whist, and sent by the Duke of Hamilton to the Countess of Yarmouth. Many years previously, in the same periodical (series i., vol. i., p. 91), it was pointed out that the *curse* of Scotland was a perversion of the *cross* of Scotland, the nine of diamonds being in form of a cross, and suggesting the shape of St. Andrew's Cross. Another contributor to that storehouse of quaint information remarked (series v., vol. vi., 194) that the nine of diamonds was often called in the Northern Highlands by the name of George Campbell, a notorious freebooter, who stole nine valuable diamonds from the Crown in Edinburgh Castle. A heavy tax to replace these ornaments was at once laid on the whole country, and as a consequence the nine of diamonds was known as the national curse.

James Houstoun, M.D., in his 'Memoirs,' 1747, says that of all his patrons Lord Justice-Clerk Ormiston 'was the most busy, and very zealous in suppressing the rebellion and oppressing the rebels, so that he became universally hated in Scotland; and when the ladies were at cards, playing the nine of diamonds (commonly called *the curse of Scotland*), they called it The Justice-Clerk'—language which seems indubitably to indicate a very ancient origin for the saying. John Ramsay, in the manuscripts by him which were published under the title of

'Scotland and Scotsmen in the Eighteenth Century,' links another name with the phrase. He calls Patrick, or Peter, Haldane, of Bearcrofts, one of the most unpopular men that ever existed in Scotland. He was 'execrated by Whigs and Tories, Episcopalians and Presbyterians,' and 'for awhile, when the nine of diamonds was turned up at cards, it was called Peter Haldane, or the Curse of Scotland.'

Constable wrote to Sir Walter Scott in 1823 that George Paton, a famous book-antiquary of Edinburgh, had many years previously imparted to him the information that the name of the card was due to the fact that one had been used 'for the order to massacre the Macdonalds of Glencoe in the year 1692.' The conclusion of Scott was that the phrase was 'a queer puzzle,' but he was inclined to think that 'it had some relation to the Union.'

A strange allusion to it is contained in No. 108 of the *Connoisseur*, a paper by Colman and Thornton, on 'Cursing and Swearing.' They suggest that, in lieu of the oaths sometimes used at the card-table, the gamester might be allowed to swear 'by *the knave of clubs*, or *the curse of Scotland;* or he might with some propriety retain the old execration of *the deuce take it.*'

The letters which Lord Chesterfield wrote in the *World* on Dr. Johnson's forthcoming 'Dictionary of the English Language,' and the scorn which the indignant sage bestowed upon them, are among the most familiar incidents in our national literature.

In these essays the glozing old politician pointed out the birth of several expressions which might not come within the ken of an isolated student working in the seclusion of a court off Fleet Street. One of them had its origin in the world of cards, probably in the rooms of White's or Arthur's. 'I was also a witness,' writes Chesterfield, 'to the rise and progress of that most important verb to *fuzz*, which, if not of legitimate birth, is, at least, of fair extraction. As I am not sure that it has yet made its way into Mr. Johnson's literary retirement, I think myself obliged to inform him that it is at present (December 5, 1754) the most useful and the most used word in our language, since it means no less than dealing twice together with the same pack of cards for luck's sake at whist.' The same word had previously been used by another writer in the same journal, in the number which appeared on October 11, 1753. A lady in love with a country gentleman as ignorant of affairs of gallantry and town-fashions as a Hottentot, illustrates his lack of acquaintance with the manners of the fashionable world at the card-table. He would on rare occasions make a fourth at a whist-party, but even half-crowns he considered excessive stakes; and 'as to shuffling, fuzzing, changing of seats, hints to a party, setting up honours without holding them, and the like, which are the essentials of the game, he was an absolute idiot.' The labour of the insinuating peer and his colleague in that paper was in vain. The

word did not find its way into the Great Cham's Dictionary, and it has long since passed out of use.

The parson in Praed's lines, who cut the fiercest quarrels of the card-table short with the exhortation to 'Patience, gentlemen, and shuffle,' used an expression of considerable antiquity. In the novel of 'Quentin Durward' it is put into the mouth of Louis XI., who mysteriously whispers into the ear of the Count de Dunois the pregnant words, 'Patience, cousin, and shuffle the cards till our hand is a stronger one'; and to this speech Sir Walter adds the explanation that in 'Don Quixote' 'the same proverb was quoted by Durandarte in the enchanted cave of Montesinos.' The subject is again referred to in Lockhart's 'Life,' and the phrase is again cited as the 'old receipt of Durandarte.'

The word 'lurch,' still remaining in common use in the expression to 'leave them in the lurch,' used to be in constant application at whist, but has long since dropped out of recollection. It was used in the phrase to 'save your lurch' when your adversaries stood at nine or four, according as long or short whist was played, and you won the odd trick. The common expression now is 'to save a bumper.'

In England the rule is to cut the cards and place the upper packet towards the opponents; in America the upper section is put by the cutter near himself. The deal itself may also be productive of good or bad luck to the player. Even the number in which the cards may be dealt has varied since the intro-

duction of whist. Richard Seymour, the author of 'The Court Gamester,' informs us that long ago it was usual to deal four cards together; but that in his day it had come to be the established rule to deal but one at a time. From his language, it would seem that the habit of lumping four cards together afforded an undesirable facility for the introduction of improper practices. However that may be, the cards at whist are nowadays invariably distributed one at a time to each player. Strange to say, in the other great game at cards, that of piquet, a different procedure is still adopted. In that diversion the cards can be divided in twos or in threes.

The old adage, handed down from generation to generation, and always rising to the lips when the occasion for the remark presents itself to the card-player, is that 'a slovenly cut is good for the dealer.' It behoves the cutter of the cards, therefore, unless he wishes to favour his opponents at the expense of his partner and himself, to guard against such a blunder in dividing the pack. A misdeal or a fresh deal is held to be productive of a hand in which the cards are unequally sorted among the players. It has been laid down by those who love strange coincidences and inexplicable corollaries that after one of these incidents, a misdeal or a fresh deal, one of the company seated at the table will 'nine times out of ten hold at most but one card in one of the four suits.' The whist-player in the *Philidorian*, who disguised his identity under the name of a

'Meltonian'—it is now known that he was Mr. George Walker, the great authority on chess—went so far as to assert that he had seen a bet made after such an accident had occurred that the event would be followed in the next deal by one of the four hands having none, or at the most but a single card, in one of the suits. He had himself been so much struck with this mystery that he put it to the test of his own experience. He tried it over 'patiently with a friend twenty times, and fourteen out of the twenty' the result followed as was predicted. The explanation possibly is that single cards are of more frequent occurrence than is generally supposed. A course of patient investigation might end in proof that in ordinary play the number of occasions in which a single-card suit occurred with one at least of the four executants was no less than three times out of four.*

'Whitechapel play' used to be the contemptuous expression applied to a man who played his aces and king at random, without any attempt to utilize them to bring in a long suit or to benefit his hand by their aid in other ways. In and around Manchester the

* It may be well to state that the story (often printed in England) of the soldier who, when accused of vagrancy and the possession of a pack of cards, expounded to the magistrates the useful lessons which he drew from them, was taken from the literature of Italy, and is frequently sold as a broadside in its streets. In Germany the card-explaining soldier is converted into a Lutheran, and the scene is represented as occurring in a Protestant church.

same kind of wasteful play was known by the term of 'Oldham play.' At Edinburgh the old ladies designated it 'chairman's play'—a phrase which carries the mind back to the days when ladies were carried to routs and similar entertainments in sedan-chairs (*Notes and Queries*, series iii., vol. ix., 440).

In England cards are ordinarily played for money or for love, but I have heard it said that in certain financial circles a dozen years since, when Mysore Gold Mining Shares were quoted at the nominal price of half a crown apiece, the certificates of that company used to pass from hand to hand at that fixed currency, as being more genteel or less troublesome than the ordinary coin of that value. A joke has appeared in print, in the pages of *Chambers's Journal* for October, 1882, that a game at whist was once proposed in a squatter's hut in New Zealand. The stranger who was the guest of the evening asked the natural question, 'What points?' The ready answer came, 'The usual game, of course; sheep-points, and a bullock on the rubber.' Which would be the more embarrassing for the guest, to win or to lose?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE IDEAL WHIST-PLAYER.

Treatises on whist are of little use, not infrequently indeed they are of positive disadvantage, if they are not studied with intelligence. There are in the card-rooms of the London and provincial clubs a few professors of the game who make it their daily boast that they have modelled their game on the principles of Clay, and yet inflict dishonour on his memory in every moment which they spend at the card-table. To many of these gentlemen who claim to know his treatise by heart, may be applied his own epigram on the peer with whom he once played double dummy all the way from Cannes to Paris. 'To play against him is murder, to play as his partner is suicide.' The whist-player, like the poet, cannot be created by artificial means. Nature must have framed his being. If the inspiration of the game does not animate his existence, his industry in its pursuit is but wasted. He should seek other scenes of pleasure, and should practise, with more success, at the pursuits for which his faculties are better adapted.

The qualities of a good whist-player have been defined by several English writers of eminence, and by none with more fulness of detail than by Lord Beaconsfield. When a young man, he was associated —as in the case of John Murray and his literary ventures—with schemes, like the transfer of the editorship of the *Quarterly Review* and the starting of the *Representative* newspaper, requiring the possession of the highest knowledge of mankind and of sagacity in business, and he combined with it the keen enjoyment of the gaieties of social life. He must often have sat down at a card-table in the best London clubs, and taken stock of the characteristics of the best players of his day. One of them indeed—it was Clay himself—was his companion in travel and his associate in every enterprise, save that of entering the same division-lobby in the House of Commons. Disraeli's definition of the characteristics of an expert in whist is laid down in the 'Infernal Marriage,' which was published in the *New Monthly Magazine* for 1834, a journal then directed by his friend, afterwards Lord Lytton. 'Tiresias loved a rubber,' and his affection was justified by his skill, for he was a first-rate player, though—and this defect shows that he must have been a diplomatist, perhaps an embodiment of the wary Metternich—'given a little too much to finesse.' The usual result followed on this fatal tendency. 'He so much enjoyed taking in his fellow-creatures that he sometimes could not resist

deceiving his own partner.' Disraeli having mentioned, as in all honesty he was bound to point it out, the presence of this defect in his creation, then thought of the good points which he shared in company with all the leading professors of the game. 'Whist . . . requires no ordinary combination of qualities; at the same time, memory and invention, a daring fancy and a cool head.' All these were found in Tiresias, who recognised in the play of a hand at whist the same incidents and mutations that passed before his view in the world at large. To him 'a rubber was a microcosm, and he ruffed his adversary's king, or brought in a long suit of his own, with as much dexterity and as much enjoyment as in the real business of existence he dethroned a monarch or introduced a dynasty.'

The party sit down to play, and during the rubber the following maxims are uttered:

'He who plays before his turn at whist commits as great a blunder as he who speaks before his turn during a negotiation.'

'Those who want to lead must never hesitate about sacrificing their friends.' To this proviso I would add the caveat that a player should not take the lead out of his partner's hand, when he has played a winning card, unless with the absolute certainty that such a course will prove to their mutual advantage.

'I love a thirteenth card; I send it forth, like a mock project in a revolution, to try the strength of

parties.' Such a card is often played with the greatest effect, but a bad player, who starts it upon the world when it will be trumped by a weak opponent, commits an act of flagrant injustice to his partner.

'Next to knowing when to seize an opportunity, the most important thing in life is to know when to forego an advantage.' This remark may be illustrated by a reference to the Vienna coup.

'It seldom answers to follow the advice of an opponent.' This is a venerable piece of antiquity which carries us back to schoolboy-days and the apothegm of *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*

The second critical enumeration of the leading qualities which go to make up the character of a skilled whist-player is that of the weird Edgar Allan Poe in his 'Murders in the Rue Morgue,' and its chief points bear a strong resemblance to those expressed by Benjamin Disraeli. It begins with the usual pæan in laudation of the expert in whist, the prelude of praise which demonstrates, as the cynical might say, that Poe himself had formed an estimate, and that not a disparaging one, of his own powers in the game. 'Whist has long been noted for its influence upon what is termed the calculating power; and men of the highest order of intellect have been known to take an apparently unaccountable delight in it. Proficiency in whist implies capacity for success in all those more important undertakings where mind struggles with

mind.' This is the prelude of praise, but Poe henceforth goes into detail, and dwells on the value of observation and deduction. 'To observe attentively is to remember distinctly, and, so far, the concentrative chess-player will do very well at whist.' The rules that Hoyle has constructed for the play of the game are framed intelligently and are worthy of the closest study, but the skill of an analyst is the principal desideratum in the game. The good player knows what to observe. 'He makes in silence a host of observations and inferences.' The 'embarrassment, hesitation, eagerness or trepidation' of partner or opponent all reveal their secret to the old hand in the game. Nothing of value escapes his notice or goes by unheeded, and he soon comes 'into full possession of the contents of each hand.'

The situations that occur in a game at whist are likened by Sir George C. Lewis to those that arise in the world of politics. 'The distribution of the cards depends upon circumstances not within the control of any of the players, but, with the instruments which fall to his lot, each one plays as he likes. The result, therefore, depends partly upon chance and partly upon skill.' 'Tis so in politics. The circumstances with which the politician has to deal are beyond his control, but he can guide them with more or less success, and whether good fortune or disaster attends his operations depends partly upon the character of the circumstances upon which

he has to act, and partly upon the wisdom, skill, and prudence with which he conducts himself in reference to them.

The decline and fall of whist form the burden of the song of Cornelius O'Dowd in a chapter contained in the first series of his essays 'Upon Men and Women.' It is a melancholy strain, pitched at the start and sustained throughout in too mournful a key. Why does the number of whist-players decline every year? That is his plaintive inquiry, and the answer is couched in the saddest of tones, 'Ours is, of all the times recorded by history, the dullest and dreariest; rare as whist-players are, pleasant people are still rarer. . . . It is fashionable to be stupid.' A vast array of the performers, when whist was in vogue, rises to his view. There passes before his eyes a vision of countless card-tables frequented by 'the most eminent divines, the greatest ministers, the most profound jurists, the most subtle diplomatists.' Nor was this spectacle of talent to be wondered at, for the mysteries of the game demanded the highest qualities of the intellect. Think, he bursts out in overwhelming force, of 'the varied lessons, moral as well as mental, that the game instils; the caution, the reserve, the patient attention, the memory, the deep calculations of probabilities embracing all the rules of evidence, the calm self-reliance and the vigorous daring.' These are the requisites of the whist-player, and who can be surprised, is the inevitable conclusion of Charles

Lever, that in an age of such portentous dulness men with these gifts are of exceptional rarity?

An unknown writer in *All the Year Round* for March, 1860, expressing his sentiments in an article bearing the affected title of 'Whistology,' has also delineated the character of the ideal whist-player. In his eyes it is a combination, in about equal proportions, of the perfect Christian gentleman and the practised man-of-the-world. He should be endowed with 'patience, charity, forgiveness and forbearance,' qualities which go far to make up the character of the perfect man in respect to his fellow-creatures, and should add thereto the more direct gifts of 'promptitude, considerable readiness in emergency, fortitude under calamity, a clear faculty to calculate probabilities, an admirable memory, and a spirit at once self-reliant and trustful.' These are some of the faculties, without which it is impossible to attain to the highest level in the ranks of the whist-players. The moral is pointed by a reference to the especial attributes of three eminent natives of a foreign land. The expert in cards should be 'a Murat in pursuit, a Masséna in resistance, and a D'Orsay in politeness.'

After these laudations of the game of whist and those who practise it, fairness demands the insertion of an opposite opinion. Such extravagant eulogy requires a corrective, and one can be obtained from the 'Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer,' the artist. He hated cards, and his anger even extended to

music. These two habits of mankind he held to be 'the great destroyers of conversation.' Were he an absolute monarch, endowed with that control over his subjects which their interests demanded, and anxious to perpetuate his rule over them, he 'would take off the duty on cards, and have thousands of reams of cheap music at every stationer's.'

For the whist-player, the gift which is above all necessary is that comprised in the single word *coolness*. He must be cool. If he becomes flurried and nervous, his faculties will slip from him. He will omit to notice the call of his right-hand neighbour, and slaughter his partner by leading up to it. He will not have observed whether his partner in returning a lead has shown the possession of three or four cards in the suit. He will go from blunder to blunder, until the rubber ends in hopeless failure. Coolness and self-possession are, indeed, the indispensable desiderata at whist. We cannot, however, expect everyone to show that mental abstraction from the events around him which are recorded of Charles X. or of Lord Sligo.

The rubbers which the Bourbon King played when the Revolution was speeding its course through Paris have been already noticed. The other example comes near to that of the Legitimist monarch. Lord Sligo was staying at one of his houses in a mountainous and remote district of Ireland, when the news arrived that his best-known residence, Westport House, on the jagged sea-coast of Mayo, was on fire.

It was in the depth of winter, and the snow was lying deep on the ground. Having ascertained that the fire was raging with such intensity that his presence would be of but little use, he resumed, with only a moment's break, the game of whist at which he had been playing.

Another instance of presence of mind comes to us from across the Atlantic. It is told to us of Henry Clay, the American statesman, whose name is associated in history with the measures under which slavery was confined to limited and modified territory in the United States. He was staying at the National Hotel one night, when the cry of 'Fire!' rang through the building, and broke up for a time the game of whist in which his energies were then absorbed. Where is it, and what is the immediate danger? This was the inquiry which he at once made, and an answer was quickly obtained and communicated to him. When he had ascertained that the fire had not yet reached the adjoining apartments, he said to his comrades at the table, 'Never mind, we have time for another hand.'

A similar instance of self-possession occurs to my memory. It was that of a Quaker called Charles Fox, who kept a bookseller's shop in his native town of Falmouth, and it is preserved in Southey's 'Espriella.' His house was on fire; he found that no effort could save it, so without any attempt to mitigate his loss, he 'went upon the nearest hill and made a drawing of the conflagration.' Southey

adds that the Quaker's conduct was 'an admirable instance of English phlegm.' As the anecdote records a good act on the part of a satirist who committed many ungracious deeds, I may be pardoned for adding that Dr. Wolcot, the original of Peter Pindar, 'saved the horses in the stable by muffling their heads in blankets.'

An instance of coolness of intellect and self-possession even more striking is recorded in *Notes and Queries* for May 19, 1866. Four Englishmen in India were absorbed in the game, when one of them, with impressive quietness of tone and solemnity of speech, said, 'Sit still, I entreat you all; if you move, I am a dead man instantly.' They obeyed, and he called to an attendant in the same quiet manner, 'Bring a saucer of milk, and put it down where I point. A cobra capella has twisted round my leg.' They sat without movement; the milk was brought, and the reptile, who loves it, and rarely fails to recognise it if near, slowly uncoiled itself from the man's leg and, turning to the milk, began to drink it. The whist-player's life was saved.

Equanimity of Temper.—The whist-player must learn to bear misfortune with resignation, and victory without excessive exultation. The man who breaks out into a passion of fury at his partner over some real or fancied fault will not be long in finding, if his colleague is not a first-rate player, that his explosion of anger has only made things worse. If

his partner in cards is a lady, he may have to endure the misfortune that befell Braxfield, who was forced to apologize for the string of oaths that he had thrown at her head, with the frank admission that he had momentarily mistaken the lady for his wife.

If his colleague in misfortune is masculine, he may be treated in another way, possibly as Colley Cibber punished the old General. They were playing cards one night at Tom's Coffee-house in Russell Street, Covent Garden, one of the few houses in London which were only open to subscribers. As the cards were dealt to the playful Colley, 'he took up every one in turn and expressed his disappointment at every indifferent one.' As the game went on, he did not follow suit, whereupon the testy old General cried out, 'What! have you not a spade, Mr. Cibber?' The Poet-Laureate, nothing abashed, looked at his cards, and answered, 'Oh yes; a thousand!' a reply which drew forth a very short and peevish comment from the General. Colley, who was a very cool customer, and was besides 'shockingly addicted to swearing,' as the narrative says, retorted with, 'Don't be angry, General; for, damme, I can play ten times worse if I like!'

Theophilus Swift, a relation of the Dean, was a man of irascible temper, which, under the influence of encouragement from others, developed into an undesirable tendency towards duelling. He became notorious for his violence, and everyone who came

into contact with him dreaded lest some unpremeditated act should lead to a hostile meeting at Chalk Farm or some other recognised place of resort for such encounters. Swift was devoted to whist, and never lost an opportunity of indulging in the game. On one occasion he was seated at a card-table under the shade of the cathedral which dominates over the waters of the Severn at Worcester, and his partner was a man of a 'somewhat *nervous* temperament.' As the incident occurred in the last century, the game was long whist. The score of Swift and his partner stood at eight, and at that stage of the game, as those who have played it will remember, it was lawful—nay, more, it was imperative—for anyone holding two honours in his own hand to put to his partner the terse question, 'Can you one?' which, being interpreted, means 'Have you a third honour in your hand?' If the answer was in the affirmative, they scored two by honours, and the game was won without any further play. Swift looked, but looked in vain, for any indication from his partner that he was in possession of two honours. Great, therefore, was his surprise when, as the game proceeded, two honours came from his partner's hand. He burst out, with loud voice and stern looks, with the searching question :

'Why did you not call, partner?'

'Sir, sir, I — I winked,' was the trembling response.

'Winked!' roared Swift—'winked! Why, sir, are you a gentleman and wink at whist?'

This was too much for the winker. He rushed at full speed from the card-table, leapt by twos and threes down the steps from the cathedral precincts to the river, jumped into the ferry-boat, and was on the other side of the Severn in an instant. Never again did he venture to meet this truculent fire-eater at a Worcester card-party.

A worse fate than even either of these may befall the quarrelsome player. Let him take warning by an incident which happened in the spring of 1789. A 'fattish' lady—the discourteous epithet is not mine—was playing at cards at an assembly. Her partner screamed out: 'Dear me, madam, what are you doing? What can you be dreaming about? You have the ace in your hand, and you suffer the adversary's king to pass.' A glance at the lady quickly revealed that any explanation of her misconduct was impossible. She had been seized with a stroke of apoplexy, 'which put an end to both her and the rubber.'

An incident of this kind has not always been considered an adequate reason for the abandonment of a rubber. The game which was being played in the Tower of London when the Earl of Thanet was immured there for his political opinions was certainly interrupted for a time through the circumstance that one of his visitors had fallen into a fit, but it was at least suggested that the others should

proceed with their play in spite of his illness. A similar story of an equally unfeeling nature is told by Abraham Hayward. One of the players at a whist-table, in spite of obvious suffering, struggled through the rubber, but when it was ended rose from the table and left the room. He had only just passed through the door when he fell on the landing with a crash that reached the ears of his friends. They rushed to his aid, and for a time rendered him all the assistance in their power. One of his adversaries then said, 'He must have revoked,' and stole back to the room to inspect the cards. The other antagonist followed to help in the search, and the sick man's partner joined them 'to see fair play.' Meantime the sufferer lay stretched in his agony on the floor of the landing-stage.

Life in the little towns that fringe the borders of Dartmoor was marked throughout the last century by an extreme primitiveness of character. Their inhabitants lived to themselves, and were cut off from any communication with the residents in the more populous towns of Devonshire. Many of them developed eccentricities of character which served to endear them still more to the friends who dwelt in as sequestered a condition of life as their own. One of these 'characters,' who dwelt at Moreton Hampstead, the capital of the eastern extremity of Dartmoor, was a certain Dr. Vial, known to all the country-side as a kindly, if somewhat rough, physician, whose chief relaxation in the evenings,

when his services were not required for his profession, consisted of a half-dozen rubbers of whist. One evening, in the midst of a deal, the old doctor fell off his chair in a fit. The rest of the party were overwhelmed with anxiety, and gathered around him in consternation. By slow, almost imperceptible degrees he showed signs of recovery, and at length he was able to articulate. The first complete words that fell from his lips were, 'What is trumps?' (Mrs. Bray's 'Devonshire,' iii. 199, 200.)

Courage.—This would be recognised by all as one of the most important requisites for a whist-player. He must ever bear in mind and act upon the glowing words of Danton: 'Il nous faut de l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace.' He must not hesitate to finesse with boldness—yes, even with apparent recklessness, if the game is going against him, and it can only be saved in that way. The finesse must, of course, be exercised with judgment; and, above all, the player must be zealously on his guard, lest a practice which, when successful, is delightful above every other pleasure, should get the mastery over him. Some players, naturally of great skill and shrewdness, have been known to become so addicted to the habit of finessing as to throw away many games which otherwise they must have won. On the other hand, a few performers of considerable ability lay down the rule that a finesse should never be attempted in the second round of an ordinary suit. The habit of one man seems to me as vicious

as the rule of the other. It is impossible in the game of whist to establish an unvarying rule, one which shall never be changed, as to the times and opportunities for finessing. On such a point each player must trust to his own judgment; and it may safely be predicted that the sanguine player will risk his luck on such a die more frequently than the man who is by temperament of a despondent disposition.

The enthusiasm for whist, which overcomes all obstacles, was never more markedly shown than in the case of some blind players. The system adopted by Stanley, the blind organist, and 'leader of the oratorio band in Drury Lane,' is partly explained by Lætitia M. Hawkins in her 'Anecdotes' (1822), pp. 203-205. The cards were marked for him by his sister-in-law, and a pack was 'a great curiosity, eagerly acquired.' The 'court-card system' had slipped from her memory, but the 'numbers of the pips were pricked on the others with a very fine needle,' the suits marked in the different corners. His cards were arranged for him by some outsider, and 'each person as he played named the card which he had selected for that purpose.' Dr. Thomas Campbell, who came from Ireland in 1775, and wrote his 'Diary of a Visit to England,' with many glimpses of Dr. Johnson, described Stanley 'as a very agreeable person and comely for a blind man.' He played 'with as much ease and quickness as any man' Campbell ever saw.

Charles Bennet, the blind organist of Truro Church, played on the same plan, and soon became an expert. When Mr. Henry Fawcett lost his eyesight, his secretary, Mr. Dryhurst, himself a whist-player, devised a similar plan for his chief, who 'learnt to play correctly with remarkable quickness. Three days after he had begun the experiment he could play and win a game without making mistakes, and without hesitating over the cards longer than his antagonist.'

The man who lacks courage, who goes around London passing from club to club with the piteous cry that four by honours have been persistently against him for years, that he loses, even at small points, hundreds of pounds every year, stands out as one of the greatest bores of the card-room. It is better not to play at all than to sit down with a man who has made up his mind before he begins that he is sure of losing. This class of player is not the creation of the present day. His origin dates back to a very early period in the history of the game of whist. One of the earliest papers in the periodical of the *World*, which was projected and edited by Edward Moore—it was No. 7, and it appeared on February 15, 1753—described the manners and ways of the persons abandoned to this vice. The male players were designated by him as 'growlers'; but that was too harsh a term for the ladies, and they were called by the softer title of the 'fretters.' The conversation of two of these

fretters at a whist-table at an *assemblée* in Thames Street, when in the course of a game they alternately experience the vicissitudes of good and evil fortune, and give full liberty to their vexation, is depicted by him with much vivacity. The conclusion at which he arrived was that they were 'public as well as private nuisances,' and he ended his paper by declaring 'that, in imitation of the great Mr. Hoyle, I am preparing a book for the press entitled "Rules of Behaviour for the Game of Whist," showing, through an almost infinite variety of good and bad hands, in what degree the muscles of the face are to be contracted or extended, and how often a lady may be permitted to change colour, or a gentleman to bite his lips.'

Memory.—This is a priceless possession at whist. Without it success is impossible, and every effort to attain to excellence in the pursuit must end in disastrous failure. The whist-player must possess the power, as the cards pass before his eyes, of imprinting them on his memory. He must comprehend them in his mind intuitively without any strain, and with it should be the faculty of discarding the recollection at the close of the hand. The whist-memory must be innate in the mind of the player, and perfection will come by practice. Though other mental qualities may disappear, this will sometimes linger after every other trace of intellect shall have been effaced. A striking illustration of this is told in 1781 by the Scotch Law-Lord Monboddo to Dr.

Horsley, a fighting Churchman and a pugnacious philosopher. The faculties of the late Provost of Edinburgh had given way, but although he had lost his judgment and memory in everything else, there still remained the remarkable ability at whist which had always characterized him, and he played the game as well as ever. This surprising survival of an exceptional gift, when every other had faded into inanition, puzzled the critical discernment of the Scotch metaphysician. He could only fall back on the trite reflection, 'There is nothing so wonderful in nature as the human mind; the more I study it, the more I am amazed.'

A good whist-player must be consumed with perennial enthusiasm for the game. If he is confined to his bed, he should follow the example of the distinguished professor of political economy, who summoned three of his comrades to his bedside, and solaced the confinement to which he was doomed with a rubber of whist. Above all, he must ever be on his guard, lest the failure of yesterday should prevent him from resuming his occupation to-day with renewed hope. He should banish from his mind the recollections of the past defeat, and not allow the calculations of the present to be impeded by the knowledge that twenty-four hours previously all his plans ended in the victory of his opponents. Unless he can drive such thoughts far away, the end of the second day's play will resemble that of its predecessor. Not that the

forgetfulness of the past should tempt him into carelessness of play. In whist, as in war, the *mot* of the great Napoleon is ever true, 'Le jeu est toujours à celui qui fait le moins de fautes.' But the enthusiast in whist must not brood over the failures of the past. Sir James Mackintosh, in his 'Diary,' chronicled a peculiarity in play at whist which he 'thought not inapplicable to the game of life.' One of his friends, who was immersed in love for the game, 'always lost, because, instead of thinking how he was to play the hand before him, he thought only of his blunders in the last hand.' The perfect player should also learn how to adapt his hand to the strength or the weakness of his partner. With two strong opponents and a partner on whom it is impossible to rely at a critical moment for adequate support, the unfortunate expert should be content with playing a backward game, and should endeavour, by an artful display of misleading cards, to deceive his opponents in their schemes of play. On a bad partner a false card can have little effect, but it may often circumvent the designs of a skilled opponent, drawing the legitimate conclusion from the card that has been played. Lord Henry Bentinck knew the value of a false card when he explained to the perplexed bystander, who could not comprehend the object of his manœuvres, that his partner was a *muff*.

There are several classes of players that rank among the horrors of club-life. Take in the first

place the man who passes his whole time at the whist-table in a state of hesitation. He looks at all the cards in his hand, examines them, and rejects them one after the other, and finally, with a plunge of despair, plays the wrong one. This is not his solitary vice. His anxiety, lest partner or opponent should have called for trumps, and he not have noticed it, fills everyone else with distress. In the hope of aiding his imperfect faculties, he perpetually demands to see the last trick. This, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, only adds to his confusion, and leaves him in a worse state of bewilderment.

The continued existence of the rule which allows a player 'to see the last trick turned' is greatly to be deprecated. It tends to foster a spirit of inattention to the game, and to discourage the energies of the student of the game who follows the fall of the cards with fitting keenness of observation. An average player does not demand the exposure of the last trick more frequently than once or twice in a whole evening, but the less practised executant delays the progress of his colleagues at the table by the persistency of his demands to see the four cards of the last hand, and imperceptibly produces, in those about him, the defects which exist in his own person. The trick which has been turned and quitted should not be open to observation after more than one card of the succeeding hand shall have been placed on the table, and it is to be hoped that the next revision of the rules will embody this

or a similar alteration. This reform has been advocated by the most thoughtful exponents of the game for at least half a century. Francis Paget Watson, in his treatise on 'Short Whist,' went so far as to say, 'You cannot demand the sight of the last trick at short whist. The "longs" sanctioned it, and continue to do so,' and Watson justly adds, 'It is a mockery upon the game, which implies the greatest attention as it proceeds, and the sooner it is altogether got rid of the better.'

Look, for a change, at the man who only plays for his own hand. His vision is limited to thirteen cards only, and his perception takes no note of those with his partner. He plays an isolated and selfish game, never seems to understand the knack of combining his own with his partner's cards, and at the close of the hand, although he often manœuvres the thirteen cards in his own possession with great skill, defeat usually attends his efforts.

Enter the card-room of any of the London clubs, and you will certainly find there a performer who is overcome by another and almost equally terrible vice. His failing is that of playing false cards, no matter who his partner may be. This, too, when crowned with success—for a false card will sometimes save and sometimes make a rubber—comes home to the human heart with superlative delight. But the man who tries it once, and finds it end in good-fortune, falls a victim to the practice. He forgets that, if a false card deludes his opponents,

it as often as not deceives his partner. The taint of uncertainty hangs around him. His partner is always beset with doubt; he never knows the cards which are comprehended in the ambiguous hand of his cunning colleague. They play at cross-purposes, and their progress is as slow as that of a pair-oar in which each sitter keeps separate time for himself.

One other specimen—the 'slovenly' specimen—is worthy of notice. He is often a player of considerable ability, and his defects are those of a personal character, showing that lack of consideration for the happiness of others which is a blot on the manners of the age. He is more successful in keeping partner and opponents in a perpetual state of worry than in anything else. He puts his trump-card in the middle of the table, shuffles out of turn, pitches his cards before him in such a manner that they fall face downwards on the table, and spreads his tricks over such an expanse of space that the sixth is all but tumbling over the side of the table into the lap of his right-hand opponent. These are but a few of the thousand and one annoyances that he daily commits.

To play the game of whist with moderate skill is a certain passport to social life. The skilled card-player is ordinarily possessed of keen intelligence and of varied knowledge. In most cases he is distinguished in a second walk in life, as well as in his acquaintance with the devil's books. A bond of union links together all the frequenters of a card-

room who play with average ability. Wherever his varied course may lead the whist-player, he meets with friends and associates. His warmest welcome will often be found around the tables in the card-room of the club, either in England or abroad. Among card-players feelings of the warmest friendship are always generated, and acts of kindly courtesy, often extended to assistance in business life, are the results of their daily intercourse in social pleasure. The motives of these deeds are above suspicion. They have their origin in good feeling, though occasionally, perhaps, a discordant note may break into the harmony.

An amusing instance of precipitancy in charity, giving in haste and repenting at leisure, is recorded by A. K. H. B. in the first volume of his 'Twenty-five Years of St. Andrews.' A stately gentleman, long since gone over to the majority, was ushered one severe winter into his study, and at once explained that he desired to devote a certain sum of money to the poor of the city, who were then in deep distress. He had won, such was his confession, a considerable sum at cards, and he was possessed with the presentiment that evil would dog his footsteps in future unless he dedicated some part of his winnings to pious uses. The parson, nothing loath, accepted the gift, and soon found proper opportunities for the expenditure of the cash. A few weeks passed away, and the dignified visitor once more appeared upon the scene. His object now was to

express his mortification at the entire failure of his plans for conciliating Providence. Ever since he had bestowed that money on the poor he had steadily lost whenever he sat down to the card-table. He did not openly ask for a return of the money, but it was obvious that he repented of his decision, and would have been pleased for the transfer to his pockets again of the whole, or a portion, of the gains that he had rashly parted with. The time for that had gone by. The money had long before been distributed to those in need, and A. K. H. B. had no hesitation in adding, 'it certainly had done good to them.'

The incident narrated by John Skelton in 'A Campaigner at Home'—a work issued to the public under the pseudonym of Shirley—may at first sight present a ludicrous aspect, but beneath the surface lies a deep vein of pathos. An old lady, far advanced in years, was walking one day through a churchyard, when she 'stopped before three mounds that formed, as it were, three sides of a square. She seemed to be engaged in inward prayer, for her lips moved and there was moisture in her eyes.' The graves were those of the late doctor and parson of the parish, and of an old East-Indian, noted whist-players in their day. 'There they are,' she remarked placidly, after a pause, 'the auld rubber just waitin' for me to cut in.' This quartet, in a remote part of Scotia, knew but little, possibly had never heard of many, of the ingenious devices for communicating

knowledge at whist which have been adopted within the last thirty years. Their whist, if they possessed good memories and moderate intelligence, was probably none the worse for that. If they did not encumber their powers of deduction with excessive formalism, it was all the better for the exercise of thought.

The little knot of men who gathered together at Cambridge and in London studied the game, as all must allow, with an intensity of vigour and earnestness of purpose which had not hitherto been displayed in elucidation of its mysteries. To their perception may be attributed many of the variations in practice which have since been introduced into the game, and most of us would eagerly acknowledge that these novelties have given a scientific character to whist which it previously lacked.

L'appétit vient en mangeant. The danger now is that the game will be made too abstruse. The mystery of its practice would, if certain writers and players had their way, become more mysterious than ever. Rules are now being propounded for the play of cards which may come, in the ordinary way, once or twice in a hundred rubbers. The mind is in danger of being clogged with an infinity of maxims as to the particular card to be played at a definite juncture. In whist, the exercise of intelligence should have the first place with a fine player, but intelligence will, unless a determined stand be made against the invaders, soon be deposed for arbitrary

custom. An additional argument against the adoption of these new modes of play lies in the fact that several of them clash with those laid down by older players for several generations in succession.

To the increasing abstruseness of the game may be attributed its decline in popularity. The average player or the diffident beginner is afraid to trust himself to the tender mercies of the practised performer with whom he may find himself associated should he enter the card-room of his club. He prefers not to play, although the spirit of the game is latent within him, and he would soon develop into comparative excellence, rather than be exposed to the sallies or the sneers of the skilled cynic with whom he may come into contact. Both in London and in the country the number of whist-players has suffered a material decline in the last two or three decades. Charles Lever, 'with extensive view,' surveyed the world with philosophic eye, and noted a diminution in number and merits even in his own day. His assertions are of the sweeping character that he loved to make. Soldiers are sorry performers, but sailors are worse, is the first axiom that he lays down. The second is that, on the whole, Frenchmen are better players than the English. He acknowledges that the Irish have a few brilliant players, and he asserts that the 'Scotch are the most winning of all British whisters.' Lever then travels in fancy across the waters of the

Atlantic, and sums up the Americans as 'rarely first-rate, but they have a large number of good second-class players.' His prophecy that 'even with them whist is on the decline' has been signally refuted by the course of events. Let us hope that, after the protracted period of decay which has settled on our own country, the quantity and quality of whist-players may before long show a perceptible increase.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WHIST OF THE POETS.

WHIST, like chess, glories in the possession of its own bard. The first edition of 'Whist: a Poem in Twelve Cantos; London, 1791,' was issued without any mention of its author's name on the title-page. It was his maiden effort, and it came into the world with due modesty; but the demand of the public for copies of this impression justified a second issue in the ensuing year, which bore on its face the words, 'By Alexander Thomson, Esq.' Hayward, who loved an emphatic verdict, condemned it with no uncertain sound, stigmatizing 'the poetry as feeble, the history incorrect, and the whist not oversound.' These are harsh words, and they err through excess. The author's name does not appear in the English biographical dictionaries; but from the references to him in Nichols's 'Literary Illustrations,' and the family allusions in his own works, his career can be traced without much difficulty.

Thomson's father died at Aberdeen 'in life's middle stage,' and his mother was born and died

early at Edinburgh, while his sister passed away from life when 'within Augusta's walls.' He himself was born 'on Dee's green banks' about 1763, and educated at the University of Aberdeen, though he afterwards removed to Edinburgh. In the concluding months of 1793, or early in 1794, he married, and at his death he left behind him six infant daughters. He was an accomplished scholar, knowing the classical languages of Greece and Rome, and the modern tongues of France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. His days were spent in literature; and after his first appearance in print in 1791, hardly a year passed away without the publication of a work from his pen. There followed in succession: (2) 'Essays on Novels: a Poetical Epistle, with Six Sonnets from Werter,' 1794; (3) 'The Paradise of Taste: a Poem,' 1796; (4) 'The German Miscellany: a Translation of Dramas, Dialogues, Tales, and Novels,' 1797; (5) 'Pictures of Poetry,' 1799; (6) 'The East Indian: a Comedy from Kotzebue,' 1799; (7) 'The British Parnassus: a Poem,' 1801 and 1802; (8) 'Sonnets, Odes, and Elegies,' 1801.

These were his completed labours; but he left behind him an imperfect 'History of Scottish Poetry,' a full series of 'Pictures of Poetry' on an extensive plan, and an 'Essay on the Genius and Writings of Gray,' which was ripe for publication. The list shows an immensity of study and labour, which must have overtaxed his strength. His death was awful in its suddenness. While conversing at his

house in Buccleugh Street, Edinburgh, on the evening of November 7, 1803, with Dr. Robert Anderson, the editor of the 'British Poets,' and with his family around him, he was 'seized with a paralytic affection, which in a moment deprived him of sense and motion, and in a few hours of life.' He was buried in the Grey Friars' Church, and left his widow and six children with only a moderate provision for their maintenance.

One of his sonnets, No. 73 in the volume of 1801, was written on March 24, 1791, on leaving London—'amusements' darling place,' when he looked back with pleased retrospect 'on the wintry days of four gay months in pleasure spent.' This was the period of his life at which he was introduced to the delights of the best whist of the time, and it was after his return to Edinburgh that he composed and published his poem on that seductive game. Two of its lines show that the spelling of its name had not yet been authoritatively settled, although the title of the volume shows to which way usage inclined. In the hundredth line 'whisk' rhymes with 'risk'; but in the succeeding words he bursts out with the glad acclaim, 'Whist, then, delightful whist, my theme shall be.' The game must have been carefully studied by Thomson, and he accurately estimates the qualities of the scientific whist-player. He correctly, if not poetically, observes that—

> 'The man who wishes well at whist to play
> To three propitious pow'rs must homage pay.'

And the three deities to whom he must render allegiance are defined as Memory, Judgment, and Temper, a selection of gifts which it would be impossible to improve upon. Each canto contains a detail of the game depicted in verse, and most of them are followed by a prose rendering of the incident. The earliest-known printed complete hand is chronicled in this work.

Alexander Thomson was neither the first nor the last of the poets to descant on the game of whist, but the references of some of them are not couched in such complimentary language. Pope, when painting in his airy fancy the discontent of Martha Blount on leaving the gaieties of London life after the coronation of the first George in 1715, pictures her delight in racking the susceptibilities of some honest, but dull, country squire, 'whose game is whisk, whose treat a toast in sack' ('Moral Essays,' epistle x.). This is obviously not a very flattering allusion to the game; nor is the mention of it by James Thomson, in his poem on 'Autumn,' of a more pleasing character to its devotees. The muse there chronicles the supper of the country gentleman and his friends after a day spent in the enticements of outdoor sport. The table 'groans beneath the smoking sirloin'; the mighty bowl is filled and refilled with the vineyard's best produce, and with it vies—what Jemmy evidently enjoyed for himself—'the brown October, drawn mature and perfect from his dark retreat of thirty years.' All these possess

in the poet's imagination sufficient charms of their own to satisfy the remaining hours of the day; and he resents the introduction, as tending 'to cheat the thirsty moments,' of a game at whist, which he contemptuously describes as 'walking his dull round beneath a cloud of smoke, wreath'd fragrant from the pipe.'

Josiah Relph, a poet from Cumberland, whose 'Miscellany of Verses,' 'with a glossary of the dialect' of that county, was published in 1747, and republished with a life of him in 1799, penned some lines 'To a Lady after losing at Whist.' The idea of the address was not novel to that date, and it has been adopted by a hundred writers since. It excused his want of success in the game by dwelling on the lady's beauty. 'How could we hope to conquer now? we minded not the cards, but you,' was the explanation of his defeat. A riddle in verse by Mrs. Piozzi, on the dangers of the gaming-table, is printed in *Notes and Queries* (first series, vii., 463). It shows the allurements of the table: 'Fresh, bright, and vivid with perpetual green,' and its perennial fascination, 'charming at noon, more charming still at night,' but warns the careless seeker after pleasure to avoid its dangers. 'While honour fails and tricks alone succeed,' honesty and merit are both o'erwhelmed in ruin. 'Youth, fame, and fortune stranded here are lost.'

Another of Dr. Johnson's friends, the volatile and imprudent Sir Herbert Croft, wrote on both chess

and whist. His poem in connection with the latter game was addressed 'to Miss N——, with two whist-markers,' the lady being a daughter of that indefatigable writer John Nichols. They are printed in his 'Illustrations of Literature' (vol. v., 207), and are in praise of that gift of good humour, in the possession of which both father and daughter were conspicuous above their fellows. According to the conclusion of this versifier:

'Good humour, with her sister graces,
Can beat the honours and the aces:
Good humour holds, if understood,
The thirteenth trump, or what's as good;
Good humour—partners, don't abuse her—
May have *carte blanche*, yet not be loser.
Good humour 'gainst the crossest men
May win, yes, though they reckon ten;
And 'gainst a husband or a wife
Wins every rubber all though life.'

A placid game of whist should—such is our view of his character—have been among the chief pleasures of the sober-minded poet Crabbe. If such were the case, he masked his feelings with complete success when describing in his poem of 'The Borough' the ways and habits of the inhabitants of Aldborough, in Suffolk. In the vacant hours of life men might reason among themselves on questions of public or private interest, and 'might in turn display our several talents'; but instead of passing their time in such profitable pursuits, they abandon all such thoughts 'when whist is named, and we behold the

cards.' From that moment their interest is absorbed in the game. 'Our thought, our care, our business is to play'; everything else is put on one side:

> 'Hour after hour, men thus contending sit,
> Grave without sense, and pointed without wit.'

The unsympathetic poet is forced to confess that some good is found even in this pastime. The players assemble on an equality of footing, except for their respective skill in the game, and all differences of wealth or social position are obliterated. Here 'man meets with man at leisure and at ease.' To such clubs men repair, with the object of pleasing themselves, and they attain their result by banishing care and taking their ease.

> 'Pleased, the fresh packs on cloth of green they see,
> And seizing, handle with preluding glee:
> They draw, they sit, they shuffle, cut and deal,
> Like friends assembled, but like foes to feel.'

The game proceeds, and differences of opinion, to use no harsher expression, quickly develop themselves among the players. One of them exclaims, in his irritation:

> 'A saint in heaven would grieve to see such hand
> Cut up by one who will not understand.'

A second is admonished as to his behaviour, which has overstepped the bounds of decorum:

> 'Sir, were I you, I'd strive to be polite
> Against my nature for a single night.'

The money question next comes to view, and the

weak player is warned that he is in partnership with another:

'Sir, when next you play,
Reflect whose money 'tis you throw away.'

This warning adds to his confusion. He is soon bewildered, before long a revoke is committed, and the offender is sternly reminded by his enraged partner of the grievous sin which he has perpetrated.

'Good heav'n, revoke! Remember, if the set
Be lost, in honour you should pay the debt.'

The whole letter is full of touches of humour, which must often recall a forgotten incident in the career of a whist-player. Even the petulant Gifford lost for a moment the recollection of his ailments, and put aside his prejudices and his animosities as he perused this description. 'For an easy vein of ridicule, terse expression, and just strokes of character, this description of a card-club is admirable,' is his glowing eulogy.

Wordsworth's fancy harked back in the 'Prelude' to the happy days of winter and summer which he spent during nine instructive years of pupilage at the grammar school of Hawkshead, when his health was cared for by the dear old dame whose simple cottage, even now but little altered, is visited each year by crowds of his worshippers. 'The home-amusements by the warm peat-fire,' during the long night of winter, rose before him. His schoolmates sat with him at the 'naked table, snow-white deal,

cherry or maple,' and in keen rivalry 'to the combat, loo or whist, led on a thick-ribbed army.' The cards were not, as in the gay world, neglected and ungratefully thrown by, 'even for the very service they had wrought, But husbanded through many a long campaign.' With what shouts of laughter they were played, 'oh, with what echoes on the board they fell!' To the boyish wit of the youngsters they offered cheap matter for amusement:

> 'These sooty knaves, precipitated down
> With scoffs and taunts, like Vulcan out of heaven;
> The paramount ace, a moon in her eclipse,
> Queens gleaming through their splendour's last decay,
> And monarchs surly at the wrongs sustained
> By royal visages.'

And while they frolicked round the cheerful board, with little thought of the outer world, the rain fell without ceasing, or the keen frost was binding the earth in its iron grasp.

About 1832, some lines by Mr. F. L. Slous, which bore the ironical title of 'A Quiet Rubber at Whist,' were printed for private circulation. They were many years later inserted in the pages of the 'Westminster Papers,' January 1, 1876. The title of 'A Quiet Rubber' was given to a piece which was produced at the Court Theatre early in 1876.

The admirable treatise of Dr. Pole on the game of whist concludes with a rhyming paraphrase of the chief elementary rules of the game, which many a beginner, with the happiest results in his after-play,

has committed to memory. A rival epitome of the leading principles of the game used to hang, printed on a card, on the wall of the card-room of the Malvern Club. It was entitled 'Old Bumble's Art of Whist,' and consisted of forty-four lines, bearing the initials of F. R. D. They were the composition of the Rev. Francis Robert Drew, for seventeen years the senior mathematical master at Malvern College. He died on June 3, 1883, aged fifty-five, and his remains were laid in Malvern Cemetery, under the shadow of the hills where the best years of his life were passed. His lines are worthy of a more extended circulation than they have yet received. About twenty years ago—it was dated 1873—a little volume called 'Whist in Rhymes for Modern Times,' the composition of an unknown Mr. A. Thistlewood, was given to the world, but it has not yet found its way to the shelves of the British Museum.

At the close of this chapter a few lines can be spared to preserve the recollection of the prints of the caricaturists which deal with the game of whist. Gillray, the greatest of them all for daring imagination and for technical skill, often found an illustration for his caricatures in the noble art. His representation, dated January 11, 1796, of four players—two women and two men—immersed in the allurements of 'twopenny whist,' paints the scene to the life. The persons depicted were drawn from nature: they were his 'cronies.' The chief lady was Mrs.

Humphrey — this was 'brevet-rank,' for she was really Miss Humphrey—who kept the print-shop in St. James's Street at which our grandfathers used to delight in congregating, and her feminine companion was Betty, her maid-servant. The two men are said to be Mortimer, the stout picture-dealer and restorer, who was their near neighbour, and a visitor from Germany. Another of his prints, which was circulated in December, 1788, represents the whimsical Sir Joseph Mawbey (a favourite subject of the satirists, alike in print and painting) and three of his associates in Parliament playing a political game at whist.

Rowlandson, as a caricaturist, was second to Gillray, and to him alone. His talent was of a coarser tint, and his technical execution was deficient in delicacy. One of his pictures rejoiced in the title of 'A Snug Rubber, or Playing for the Odd Trick.'

CHAPTER XVI.

WHIST AND THE NOVELIST.

Several of the chief writers of fiction of Great Britain have ranked among its leading experts in whist. They have recreated their faculties in the pleasures of the card-table, and have drawn from the incidents of the game many of their most amusing illustrations. The game of whist is a mimic world in which the characters current in external life are reproduced, and the passions displayed elsewhere among men and women are represented. Individual character comes out more markedly at whist than in any other social pursuit. The student of idiosyncrasy takes advantage of this development, unconscious as it often is, and carries away with him from the green-board many a trait which is subsequently expanded and adorned in the chapters of his novel.

The father of English novelists, Henry Fielding, may not have dabbled himself in the mysteries of the gay science of cards, but he must often have followed, in the public rooms of Bath, the varying

fortunes of a rubber of whist. In the brightest and best-known of his stories—'Tom Jones,' which came out on February 28, 1749, only seven years after the appearance of the volume of Hoyle—there are two references to the game. Four of the characters —Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellamar, Tom Edwards, and the lovable Sophia herself—are 'engaged at whist, and in the last game of their rubbers,' when, at the instigation of Lady Bellaston, Tom rattles off the fiction of the death of Tom Jones in a duel, with which he had been primed by that intriguing creature. Under the influence of this shock, poor Sophia resumes the deal which she had momentarily interrupted, 'and having dealt three cards to one, seven to another, and ten to a third,' dropped the rest of the pack on the table, and fell back in her chair in a swoon.

When Nightingale explained to Tom Jones the reason why he had dismissed his man-servant, he justified his conduct by the heinousness of the offence which the footman had committed. It was not the first of his faults, for many of his 'provoking' acts had been overlooked by his master, but the last offence, Nightingale pleaded, was inexcusable. He had come home to his lodgings in Bond Street that night several hours before his usual time—an act which is always imprudent on the part of a lodger —and had found 'four gentlemen of the cloth' comfortably seated by his fireside in all the pleasures of a game of whist. This piece of indis-

cretion he would have passed by in silence, or at the best with a word of warning that it must not be repeated. There was worse to come, and that constituted the gravamen of the offence. 'My Hoyle, sir,' he cried aloud in his agony, 'my best Hoyle, which cost me a guinea, lying open on the table, with a quantity of porter spilt on one of the most material leaves of the whole book.' Even this, provoking as it was, might have been overlooked, but the servant answered with the pertness of his class, that 'several of his acquaintances had bought the same for a shilling, and that his master might stop as much in his wages, if he pleased.' This, and the subsequent proceedings, rendered their parting a matter of necessity. Nightingale lost his servant, and remained in the possession of a damaged Hoyle.

When Mr. Pickwick and his friends arrived, after many vicissitudes of fortune, at the hospitable house of Mr. Wardle, the manor farm of Dingley Dell, the most appropriate amusement which their host could provide for them was an 'old-fashioned' rubber at whist. The partners were the old Mrs. Wardle and Mr. Pickwick, against Mr. Miller and the fat gentleman. 'The rubber was conducted with all that gravity of deportment and sedateness of countenance which befit the pursuit entitled "whist"—a solemn observance to which, as it appears to us, the title of "game" has been very irreverently and ignominiously applied.' The troubles of the game arose out of the

blunders of Mr. Miller, which were heightened by the fact that, through paying more attention to the frolics of the round game of cards which was being played at another table in the room than to the rubber in which he was himself engaged, he more than once neglected to follow the course of the play with adequate attention. Once at the conclusion of a hand he took up the odd trick with the observation, 'That couldn't have been played better, I flatter myself—impossible to have made another trick'; but his boast was quickly crumpled out of life by the old lady. 'Miller ought to have trumped the diamond, oughtn't he, sir?' was her remark to Pickwick. He nodded assent; and in response to an appeal from the unfortunate player, his partner, 'the fat gentleman,' in an awful voice added, 'You ought, sir.' The game proceeds in due form.

'"Two by honours—makes us eight," said Mr. Pickwick.

'Another hand. "Can you one?" inquired the old lady.

'"I can," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Double, single, and the rub."

'"Never was such luck," said Mr. Miller.

'"Never was such cards," said the fat gentleman.'

Then ensued a solemn silence, when the four players were described as: 'Mr. Pickwick humorous, the old lady serious, the fat gentleman captious, and Mr. Miller timorous.'

Again sped on the game, with another double

by Mr. Pickwick and old Mrs. Wardle, she 'triumphantly making a memorandum of the circumstance by placing one sixpence and a battered halfpenny under the candlestick.

'"A double, sir," said Mr. Pickwick.

'"Quite aware of the fact, sir," replied the fat gentleman sharply.'

Again the game went on, and again the same partners won, aided 'by a revoke from the unlucky Miller.' This was too much for the mental and moral equilibrium of the fat gentleman, and the rest of the rubber was passed by him in 'a state of high personal excitement.' At its conclusion he 'retired into a corner, and remained perfectly mute for one hour and twenty-seven minutes,' while his unfortunate partner, the perplexed and worried Mr. Miller, 'felt as much out of his element as a dolphin in a sentry-box.'

The humours of a game of whist must often have proved a source of diversion to the observant Dickens, and he evidently was well acquainted with all the terms and terrors of the game. Mr. Pickwick was taken after his trial to Bath, and played whist in the Assembly Rooms 'with three thorough-paced female card-players. They were so desperately sharp that they quite frightened him. If he played a wrong card, Miss Bolo looked a small armoury of daggers. If he stopped to consider which was the right one, Lady Snuphanuph would throw herself back in her chair and smile, with a mingled glance

of impatience and pity, to Mrs. Colonel Wugsby, at which Mrs. Colonel Wugsby would shrug up her shoulders, and cough as much as to say she wondered whether he would ever begin. Then at the end of every hand Miss Bolo would inquire with a dismal countenance and reproachful sigh why Mr. Pickwick had not returned that diamond, or led the club, or roughed* the spade, or finessed the heart, or led through the honour, or brought out the ace, or played up to the king.'

In reply to all these grave charges the harassed Pickwick had no adequate defence. The incidents of the game had vanished from his recollection, and such reasons for his play as he originally possessed had been obliterated from his mind. Some of the company, attracted by the scoldings and angry glances from the ladies, came and looked over his hands, and their observation did not add to his happiness. The cards went against him. He played rather badly; 'and when they left off at ten minutes past eleven, Miss Bolo rose from the table considerably agitated, and went straight home in a flood of tears and a sedan-chair.' Pickwick retired to the White Hart Hotel, and 'soothed his feelings with something hot.'

The pages of Thackeray's 'Virginians' are steeped in play. How could it be otherwise, when the scenes

* An interesting letter by Dickens on his spelling of the word as 'rough,' and not 'ruff,' can be seen in the 'Westminster Papers,' iii. 41.

were laid in the Pantiles at Tunbridge Wells, and the pump-room at Bath, and the leading characters of the novel were portrayed as mixing in the fashionable world of the period? One of the prominent figures to cross the stage is Dr. Sampson, my Lord of Castlewood's chaplain; and the principal touches in his portraiture are drawn from the letters of Dr. Warner in the 'Selwyn Correspondence.' 'He was a preacher in London at the new chapel in May Fair, for which my Lady Whittlesea . . . had left an endowment. He had the choicest stories of all the clubs and coteries, the very latest news of who had run away with whom, the last *bon-mot* of Mr. Selwyn, the last wild bet of March and Rockingham.' His fashionable tittle-tattle and his jokes amused the company at the dinner-table until the chapel-bell, clinking for afternoon service, summoned him away. Fortified with a last glass of burgundy, he promised to return ere half an hour had sped away, and he was as good as his word.

On his return another bottle is discussed, and they join the ladies, when a couple of card-tables are set out for their delectation. The evening was beautiful —it was a Sunday evening, be it remembered—' and there was talk of adjourning to a cool tankard and a game of whist in the summer-house; but the company voted to sit indoors, the ladies declaring that they thought the aspect of three honours in their hand and some good court cards more beautiful than the

loveliest scene of nature. And so the sun went behind the elms, and still they were at their cards; and the rooks came home, cawing their evensong, and they never stirred except to change partners; and the chapel-clock tolled hour after hour unheeded, so delightfully were they spent over the pasteboard; and the moon and stars came out, and it was nine o'clock, and the groom of the chambers announced that supper was ready.'

So they played on day by day, and night after night, until the fortunate youth, Harry Warrington, rode away to Tunbridge Wells. The scene was changed, but the game remained the same. There was no alteration, except that the Virginian played with gamblers of an even more exalted position in life. 'Mr. Warrington and my Lord Chesterfield found themselves partners against Mr. Morris and the Earl of March,' and Harry's luck still ran high. Chesterfield 'dropped six hundred to him,' March still owed him £350, though he had emptied the contents of his pocket-book in paying the fortunate youth's winnings, and Jack Morris, who had not been so badly hit, 'roared like a bull of Bashan about his losses.'

Another night followed, when Mr. Warrington was honoured by an introduction to the Countess of Yarmouth. The august lady received him with befitting grace, for she had heard of his vast estates in Virginia, and his marvellous gains since he had been in England, and after that duty had been

performed, 'sat down to a card-table, the Bishop, and the Earl, and a fourth person being her partners.' Harry continued to pay his devotions at the card-table to the goddess of fortune, but the fickle dame averted her countenance from him, and he found himself an inmate of a sponging-house in Cursitor Street.

Lord Lytton was a practised player at cards, and he has described in 'My Novel,' with the true zest and instinct of his class, the performers that met together at the card-table 'in the drawing-room at Hazeldean Hall.' One of the set was Captain Barnabas, a perfect picture of the military club-man of Pall Mall, 'who regarded whist as the business of town and the holiday of the country.' A second was Parson Dale, and of him even his friends could not allege that he played to give pleasure to others. 'He delighted in the game, he rejoiced in the game, his whole heart was in the game, neither was he indifferent to the mammon of the thing, as a Christian pastor ought to have been. He looked very sad when he took his shillings out of his purse, and exceedingly pleased when he put others in.' *En parenthèse* the distinguished author points out that the 'strangest thing in the world is the different way in which whist affects the temper,' and having laid down this principle, one which cannot be gainsaid, then proceeds, somewhat whimsically and contradictorily, to declare that 'it is no test of temper, as some pretend—not at all.'

Like a perfect connoisseur in this seductive science, Parson Dale was ruffled by 'even his adversaries' mistakes.' His happiness was not complete unless he were matched with foemen worthy of his steel, and he only gloried in the game when it was conducted on legitimate and scientific principles. As the game waxed warm, he might be heard throughout the room, 'with elevated voice and agitated gestures, laying down the law and quoting Hoyle.' A lady, who is not a member of the set, interposes with some observation, relevant or irrelevant, and through this temporary distraction a revoke occurs. A wrong lead in trumps ensues, and this enables the opponents to bring in their long suit. Explosions of wrath resound throughout the room, but in the end the two best players divide sixteen shillings between them, a result which does not always follow in whist when it is practised in real life.

The rollicking fun of that delightful novel 'The Bachelor of the Albany' lives in the memory of most readers who have passed the meridian of life, but the name of its author, Marmion W. Savage, has passed out of human ken. It was published anonymously, and its author's fame is, as a consequence, not endowed with that vitality which his talents deserve. In it he describes a whist-party, differing from most of the creations of fiction in the fact that 'not one of the four players had the slightest real knowledge of the game. Hoyle would

have either laughed or wept had he been a looker-on.'

The young lady of the party revoked. This was to be expected.

In the middle of the play, one of the gentlemen put the provoking question, 'Spades are trumps, are they not?' and a few minutes later delivered himself of the sapient remark, 'Whist is a scientific game.' After this burst of wisdom he, too, proceeded to revoke in the most transparent manner, but nobody took the least notice of it.

At the end of the game, a second gentleman claimed two by honours 'on the strength of the ace and king,' and was allowed to score them without any correction from his opponents.

'The remainder of the game was equally scientific,' is the novelist's conclusion.

The rubber at whist which is delineated by George Alfred Lawrence, in his novel of 'Sans Merci,' chapter xxxii., is remarkable through the fact that James Clay was believed to be the original of the character of 'Castlemaine.' If such were intended, the description of his merits cannot be said to err on the side of excess. All that he can allege in praise of Castlemaine's play is that it 'was nearly first-class.' The gambler of the party won the first game, in which large bets were involved, and then, with the invariable instinct of his class, took the long odds. In the next round five trumps were given him, but through an error in judgment he did

not lead them, and the hand ended with his barely saving the game. Twice did he exclaim against his folly in omitting to lead them, and on the second occasion Castlemaine drawled out the sentence, 'It has been computed that eleven thousand Englishmen, once heirs to fair fortunes, are wandering about the Continent in a state of utter destitution, because they would not lead trumps, with five and an honour in their hands.' The phrase, unfortunately in an incorrect form and with an important omission, has passed into a proverb in the card-room. The qualifying words 'and an honour' are usually omitted, and an injustice is thus committed to the memory of a great player. The cards do not forgive. From that time forward the gambler and Castlemaine rarely held a winning card, and the rubber hastened to a disastrous conclusion.

The merits of Anthony Trollope as a whist-player have already been recognised, and as he had participated in many thousands of rubbers, and watched the habits of a vast army of whist-players, good, bad, and indifferent, he introduced the readers of 'The Bertrams' to life at Miss Todd's card-party in the seaside resort of Littlebath. One of the fashionable dames is designated Mrs. King Garded, a jest scarcely worthy of the author, and she is depicted as 'a careful, silent, painstaking player, one who . . . knew well that the monthly balance depended mainly, not on her good, but on her bad hands.' This sentence is worthy of all praise, and

should be written on the heart of every beginner at the game.

Nearly all the women in the room quarrelled consumedly over the game, and at last one of the victims of the denunciation of others, who had 'suffered from paralysis,' spread consternation throughout the company by behaving as if she were about to have a fit. Fortunately she possessed sufficient strength of body to retire from the room, and vigour enough as she withdrew to make a savage thrust, which went home, at the sharp-tongued lady, Miss Ruff, whose persistent reproaches had driven her within a measurable distance of frenzy.

Mr. James Payn happily is still with us, and he pursues his game with an energy equal to a Lytton or a Trollope. 'A Very Quiet Rubber' is the title of a little story in the third volume of his 'High Spirits.' Four players, two men and two elderly spinsters, resident in the same little town, meet night after night for a rubber at whist. Gradually they drop off in the cold grasp of death; but when reduced to three, or even, alas! to two, the spirit of gentility precludes them from admitting to a place in the set the local auctioneer and undertaker, Mr. John Newton. He hopes, in spite of every disappointment, that the survivors will receive him in their company, but every renewal of hope ends in the repetition of disappointment. His is the sad duty of witnessing them one after the other laid under

the green sod, until at last one of the old women is left alone. She, too, passes away to join the majority, and when she dies her last two packs of cards are buried with her.

A description of a rubber at whist, with the agonies of a poor wretch who cannot even score, occurs in the 'Happy Thoughts' of Mr. Burnand. Some very sprightly recollections of 'Club Whist' were published in *Blackwood's Magazine* for May, 1877, and reproduced in the twelfth volume of the new series of 'Tales from "Blackwood."' Mrs. Henniker, a daughter of the late Lord Houghton, who was himself a whist-player, and grand-daughter of the Lord Crewe whose passion for gaming has already been noticed, describes with much gusto in her novel of 'Foiled' the humours of an irritable old Admiral perpetually bullying at the card-table.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BOOKS ON WHIST, AND THEIR AUTHORS.

An intelligent treatise on the principles of whist was long needed. For a knowledge of the game several generations of players were obliged to rely on their own powers of deduction, or on what they learnt from the criticisms of those around them. The various alterations which had been introduced into it had never been explained in print, and the absence of any such record was proving a severe hindrance to the development of the game. The only treatises which existed up to 1743 were the ancient volume of Cotton, and a second work, which was little more than a *réchauffé*, slightly altered in a few points of detail, of that old chronicler from Derbyshire. The 'Compleat Gamester' of Cotton first appeared in 1674, under the rule of a King who openly played in the palace of Whitehall with his mistresses and his courtiers at the English or foreign games of cards. It seems to be in part a compilation from earlier writers, but it passed through several editions. The methods of play at whist had, however, not yet been

determined, and its pages are mainly occupied with particulars of the methods adopted by the professional cheats of London.

Many years passed away before a second volume on cards of any importance, either to the player of that period or the antiquary of the present age, was given to the world. The new work, 'The Court Gamester' of Richard Seymour, was 'written for the use of the young princesses,' and was first published in 1719. The fifth edition of the 'Compleat Gamester' came out in 1734, and the seventh edition in 1750, both having the same name of Richard Seymour as their author. The work was now divided into three parts. The first was 'The Court Gamester; or, The Games of Ombre, Quadrille, etc.' Its successor bore the general title of 'The City Gamester,' and it explained the 'true manner of playing the most useful games at cards—viz., Whist, All Fours, Cribbidge, etc.' The last section was entitled 'The Gentlemen's Diversion,' 'and it dealt with Riding, Racing, etc.' The last two parts were a revision of Cotton, and a section described the game of whist, 'vulgarly called Whisk.' In the strange language of this hack-compiler, it was said 'to be the foundation of all the English games upon the cards.' He was no flatterer of the players of his age, for very few of them, according to their critic, played correctly at it, 'though there are many Pretenders, who are the easiest to be made, and generally are made, the greatest Bubbles'; and he

enlarged Cotton's description of the cheats who prevailed in the days of Charles II. The eighth and last issue was edited by Charles Johnson, Esq., and appeared in 1754, and full advantage, without any acknowledgment, was taken of the new treatise by Hoyle. An excellent bibliography by Mr. Julian Marshall of these works by Cotton and Seymour is in *Notes and Queries* (sixth series, ix., 321-23, 381-83).

The scientific treatise which was needed to direct the attention of the followers of whist to the right course, and to develop their energies without undue loss of power, had now appeared. A teacher was urgently needed, and the occasion produced the man. The sage was Hoyle—the mighty Edmond Hoyle, whose name and death are about the only solid facts definitely ascertained about him. The incidents of his life are almost a blank. He was a preceptor in whist, giving lessons in the gay science at Bath and London, and for a time he condescended to 'wait on ladies of quality at their own houses to give them lectures' in the art; but this was before 1755. His immortal work, the 'Short Treatise,' was at first sold to his pupils, as the epitome of his teaching, in manuscript, at a guinea apiece, and the same price seems to have been charged for the volume when it first appeared in print.

Hoyle's origin and the manner in which he spent the first seventy years of his life are enveloped in obscurity; but the absence of any definite knowledge of the man has not been due to the lack of

inquiry. The pompous Thomas Frognall Dibdin, who claimed to have inspected the first edition in the library of Mr. Bainbridge, of Gattonside, confessed that he had looked in vain among the more popular biographies for particulars of the private life 'of this renowned author' ('Bibliographical Tour in England and Scotland,' 1838, ii. 1019-21). Dr. Rimbault remarked in *Notes and Queries*, so far back as March, 1858, that a biography of Hoyle was a desideratum in our literature; and an inquiry from 'Cavendish' in the same paper on February 25, 1865, failed to produce any fresh information on his career. The memoir in the 'Dictionary of National Biography' is from the pen of Mr. H. R. Tedder; but even his researches did not end in the addition of any further fact on the life of his subject.

Hoyle died in August, 1769, at Welbeck Street, Cavendish Square, London, and was buried on the 23rd August in Marylebone churchyard. Some further information about him can be gleaned from his will. It was dated on September 26, 1761, when he was described as 'Edmond Hoyle, of Queen Square, in the parish of St. George Martyr, in the county of Middlesex, Esquire.' He left the 'Messuage or dwelling-house situate in Queen Square aforesaid, in which I now reside [*i.e.*, in 1761], with the Back-house and other appurtenances,' held under a lease for a long term, of which many years were yet to run, 'with the furniture and fixtures in the said dwelling-house, unto Mrs. Margaret Walker, of

Cavendish Street, Middlesex, spinster, in trust.' His sister, Eleanor Hoyle, was to enjoy the rents of the house and to have the use of the furniture for her lifetime. After her death, but subject to the annuity after-mentioned, Mrs. Jane Crispin, wife of Mr. Silver Crispin, of Gray's Inn Lane, was to have the rents and the furniture if she survived and the lease was still subsisting. They were then left, on the same conditions, to Silver Crispin, and afterwards to Robert Crispin, their son. The annuity was to his niece, Fanny Hoyle, and was for £12, taking effect from the death of his sister Eleanor. To Mrs. Centlivre, of Queen Square, he left £5 to purchase a ring in remembrance of him. All the residue of his property passed to his sister Eleanor, and she and Robert Crispin were named as executors. The will was witnessed by Wm. Nash, D. Sill, and Richard Tennant, and was proved at London on September 6, 1769, before William Compton, Doctor of Laws, and surrogate of [Sir] George Hay. Administration was granted to Eleanor Hoyle, with power to Robert Crispin if he should apply.

Mr. Tedder's memoir contained a summary of the publications of Hoyle ; but a more extended list by Mr. Julian Marshall, the result of great labour, thoroughly exhausting the subject, was communicated by him to *Notes and Queries* in 1889 and succeeding years.

Hoyle's short treatise was entered at Stationers' Hall on November 17, 1742, by the author, as sole

proprietor of the copyright; but if Bishop Newton's statement is correct, he soon parted with his interest in the volume. The only copy known to be in existence is that in the Bodleian Library, and its title is of portentous length. It runs as follows: 'A Short Treatise on the Game of Whist, containing the laws of the game; and also some Rules whereby a Beginner may, with due attention to them, attain to the Playing it well. Calculations for those who will Bet the Odds on any Point of the Score of the Game, then playing and depending. Cases stated to shew what may be effected by a very good player in Critical Parts of the Game, References to Cases—viz., at the End of the Rule you are directed how to find them. Calculations, directing with moral Certainty, how to play well any Hand or Game, by shewing the Chances of your Partners having 1, 2, or 3 certain Cards. With variety of cases added in the Appendix. By Edmund [*sic*] Hoyle, Gent. London: Printed by John Watts for the Author, MDCCXLII.'

Hoyle's work at once became popular, and Bishop Newton contrasts his lot with that of Milton. For the copy of 'Paradise Lost' the poet 'received not above ten pounds, at two different payments'; but Mr. Hoyle, for 'the treatise on the game of whist, after having disposed of all the first impression, sold the copy to the bookseller, as I have been informed, for two hundred guineas.' This did not exhaust his profits, for he framed an 'Artificial Memory, which

he would communicate upon payment of One Guinea,' and announced that he was ready to 'explain any cases in the book upon payment of one guinea more.'

The success of a work sold at such an excessive price attracted the attention of the pirates in literature, and surreptitious cases soon came into circulation. One such is the 'Short Treatise on the Game of Whist,' which bore on the title-page the words: 'By a gentleman. Bath printed, and London reprinted, 1743,' and ran into a second edition in that year. The genuine second edition, with great additions to the laws of the game, came out in 1743, and was sold at two shillings, 'in a neat pocket size, done up in fine gold emboss'd paper'; and the advertisement in the *Craftsman* and the *Daily Post* states that the game was 'play'd at Court, White's, and George's Chocolate-Houses, at Slaughter's and the Crown Coffee-Houses.' Its genuineness was vouched for by an autograph signature of the author, 'Edmond Hoyle.' The fifth edition followed in 1744, the only copy known being in the British Museum, and it is remarkable for the fact that it is unsigned; and the sixth in 1746. The eighth edition bore the date of 1748, and was also included in a volume entitled 'The Accurate Gamester's Companion.' When the twelfth edition appeared, probably in 1761—but it was undated—it contained 'Two new cases at Whist . . . also the new laws . . . as played at White's and Saunders's Chocolate-Houses'; and it was signed in print by

Edmond Hoyle and Thomas Osborne, the printer. It was, moreover, announced that an injunction had already been obtained 'against nine persons for pirating or selling pirated editions.' The fifteenth issue, also undated, but appearing in 1769 or 1770, bore only the author's signature.

Hoyle impressed upon his readers the need of beginning with the best suit, and insisted on the value of sequences. He devoted great attention to the lead of trumps, and was emphatic on the necessity of taking out two trumps for one. He was opposed to the practice of playing the king second hand when the person in that situation held only two cards; and he urged his readers when weak in trumps to be very cautious in parting with the command of their adversary's strong suit.

When Hoyle had realized the pecuniary value of his composition on whist, he directed his attention to the other fashionable games of the day, and brought out similar volumes on Backgammon (1743), Piquet (1744), Quadrille (1745), Brag (1751). A more elaborate treatise was his 'Essay towards making the Doctrine of Chances Easy to those who understand Vulgar Arithmetick only, to which is added Some Useful Tables on Annuities for Lives,' 1754 (10s. 6d.) and 1764 (2s. 6d.). The first edition was dedicated to the Earl of Egmont, in acknowledgment of many favours; and the second was signed on the back by the publishers and proprietors, Tho. Osborne and R. Baldwin. Speculations of this

nature have always possessed a great attraction for experts at whist, and Hoyle embodied in this volume the calculations on the chief card-games which had engaged his attention during many years. In more recent times the doctrine of probabilities has been investigated with patient attention by Dr. Pole.

An abridgment of Hoyle's 'Treatise on Whist' was translated into French, and published, probably at Vienna, in 1765; and a second translation was issued at Vienna in 1776. Substantially the same rendering was included in the new edition of the 'Académie Universelle des Jeux' which appeared at Amsterdam in 1786, and in its successor, which was published at Lyons in 1805. Another translation is said to have been printed at Paris in 1783. By means of these translations the game became a matter of scientific study among the cultured classes of the Continent.

After Hoyle's death, his work reappeared in 1775 under the title of 'Hoyle's Games Improved,' and in the words of the title-page it was 'revised and corrected by Charles Jones, Esq.' Nearly a score of subsequent impressions, sometimes under the original title of 'Hoyle's Games Improved,' when Jones was mentioned as the editor, and at others as 'The New Hoyle' and 'The New Pocket Hoyle,' came out during the next seventy years. Charles Jones is said to have been 'distantly connected' with the present 'Cavendish,' but the science of whist is little indebted to him. By successive additions the work

of Hoyle, which was never remarkable for excellence of arrangement or for clearness of expression, had become terribly involved, and Jones only perpetuated the old defects. Most of these editions, down to that issued at New York without date, but probably about 1850, included the maxims of Payne, but his name had become such a myth to the world at large that it was not infrequently given as Paine. The issue of 1813 contained some further additions, apparently suggested by the volume of Mathews, and these were reprinted more than once.

In 1773 the lovers of the game were gratified by the publication of a thin anonymous volume called 'Maxims for Playing the Game of Whist, with all Necessary Calculations and Laws of the Game. London, sold by T. Payne, next the Mews-gate, St. Martin's, 1773.' These directions are marked by an acute perception of the principles of whist, and their author should be remembered as the second of the great students of the game. His name, though not mentioned on the title-page of his own work, became a household word with generations of whist-players, for his 'Maxims' were included in Jones's editions of Hoyle, and were incorporated in 'Hoyle Made Familiar. Edinburgh, 1830,' in Reuben Roy's 'Bridgwater Treatise on Whist,' and in the edition of 'Hoyle's Games' which was published at New York about 1850.

This keen student was William Payne, a teacher of mathematics, and a brother of Tom Payne, the great

bookseller in whose shop the illustrious bibliophiles of the day, such as Cracherode and Gosset, used to congregate daily. The first of his publications was 'An Introduction to the Game of Draughts, 1756,' the memory of which is preserved through the circumstance that Boswell has recorded that the dedication to the Earl of Rochford, and the preface, were written by Johnson, though he was ignorant of draughts and all other games. The substance of this work, also, was included in most of the editions of 'Hoyle's Games.' It was followed by two editions (1767 and 1768) of an 'Introduction to Geometry,' dedicated to the Duke of York, whom he appears to have instructed in mathematics, an 'Introduction to the Mensuration of Superficies and Solids, 1768,' and by the 'Elements of Trigonometry, Plain and Spherical, 1772,' dedicated to the same Earl of Rochford. From the language of the preface, it would seem that by this time he had abandoned his profession, and that the 'Maxims for Whist' were the composition of his leisure hours.

At the beginning of 1793, there came out a little tract called 'Short Rules for Whist, by Bob Short,' which was so popular among card-players that 7,000 copies were sold in twelve months. It was accompanied by a humorous preface 'To the Four Kings,' dated from Baker's Coffee-house, Exchange Alley, January 1, 1793. Bob Short followed up this success with 'Hoyle Abridged, Part II., or Short Rules for Quadrille, 1793,' but the rage for quadrille

had died out, and it met with but slight success. The thin treatise of 'Short Rules for Whist' was reprinted, with slight alterations of title, in several country towns, and its popularity long continued without perceptible diminution.

A satirical poem by John Gale Jones, the democratic orator, bearing the fantastic title of 'An Invocation to Edward Quin, as delivered at a Society called the Eccentrics,' and discussing the peculiarities of a social set at a tavern near Charing Cross, discloses the author's name. It was written by Robert Withy, a respectable stockbroker, and 'a facetious and pleasant companion, but very irascible,' the last years of whose life were harassed by pecuniary troubles. This statement finds corroboration in an advertisement of Robert Withy, stockbroker, which is appended to the *brochure* on quadrille, when his house is given as 13, George Street, York Buildings, and he is said to frequent Baker's Coffee-house. He died at West Square, Surrey, on September 19, 1803, aged seventy-two. Before trying his fortune on the Exchange, he had been for many years a book and print seller in Cornhill.

Many another *réchauffé* of Hoyle appeared in print. His 'Games' is said to have been edited by an unknown Beaufort in 1788, and an edition by G—— H—— came out in 1835. This is the first volume in which I have noticed the remark that after a misdeal, in dealing with the same pack, one of the players holds but one card in some suit. A

little volume called 'Hoyle Made Familiar . . . with the Rules and Practice, as admitted by the most Fashionable Establishments in the United Kingdom, by Eidrah Trebor, Esq.,' was published at Edinburgh in 1830. It was the composition of Robert Hardie, possibly the R. Hardie of Parliament Stairs, by whom it was printed, and it followed the example of Charles Jones, Esq., in including the 'Maxims' of Paine (*sic*). That well-known compiler, George Frederick Pardon, modernized 'Hoyle's Games,' and his treatise passed through several editions. Two works, 'The American Hoyle' and the 'Modern Pocket Hoyle,' both edited by Mr. William B. Dick, under the name of 'Trumps,' were published at New York, the first in 1865, the second in 1868. A more recent volume, 'The Standard Hoyle,' published in the same city about 1887, is remarkable through the circumstance that the contents of the section on whist are innocent of any connection with Hoyle. The first fifty-four pages are by Dr. Pole, the next division by 'Cavendish,' and the concluding part by the anonymous editor.

The author of 'The New Hoyle' (1795) is said to have been Charles Pigott, to whom was attached from youth to age the sobriquet of 'Louse' Pigott. He came from a good family, and, although educated at Eton, was a man of wide reading and a good French scholar. While at school he obtained and explained to his companions a volume with the title of 'Les Aventures d'un Pou Français,' where-

upon some wag among his 'chums' transferred to him the nickname, which stuck to him throughout life. A great gentleman-jockey, and for a time a member of the Jockey Club, he lost his fortune on the turf, became an outcast from society, and in 1793 was confined within the precincts of the Sumpter Prison. His best-known labours in print were an anonymous volume on the 'Jockey Club,' which went through many editions, and a 'Political Dictionary, explaining the True Meaning of Words: Illustrated in the Lives, Morals, Character, and Conduct of Illustrious Personages,' many extracts from which—such as the 'Blessings of War,' 'The Rights of Nobles,' 'The Rights of Priests'—were published in a separate form. Pigott died at his rooms in Westminster on Midsummer Day in 1794, and his body was buried in the family vault at Chetwynd Aston, Shropshire.

Early in 1743 the treatise of Hoyle was so well known that Horace Walpole talked of composing a grammar of bilboquet in opposition to it; and before the year was out the rage for the author had been satirized in 'The Humours of Whist: a Dramatic Satire, as acted every day at White's, and other Coffee-houses and Assemblies.' Many extracts from it have been printed in the later volumes on the game. Two passages will now suffice for the reader. Sir Calculation Puzzle, a passionate admirer of whist, and one of that numerous body of men who imagine themselves good players, and yet always lose, bursts

out with: 'O good my lord, there never was so excellent a book printed. . . . I will eat with it, sleep with it, go to Court with it, go to Parliament with it, go to Church with it.' The professor, Hoyle himself, is introduced, and the question is put to him, 'When do you oblige us with your "Artificial Memory"?'

In 1747 a posthumous volume of the 'Poems' of the Rev. Thomas Warton, Vicar of Basingstoke, was edited by his son, Joseph Warton. This clerical satirist depreciates the efforts of social reformers, for however much you may toil to cleanse the Augean stable, 'still virtue yields to Heidegger and Hoyle.' A footnote adds that the former of these unworthies introduced masquerades, 'to the great and irreparable depravation of English morals'; and that Hoyle, by writing on whist 'in a mathematical and scientifical method—than which nothing could be more pompously absurd—extremely promoted the destructive practice of gaming.' This was perhaps the view taken by Hogarth when he introduced into the breakfast scene in 'Mariage à la Mode' a volume lying on the carpet in the centre of the room, and inscribed, 'Hoyle on Whist.'

Johnson, in the *Rambler* for May 8, 1750, draws the character of a lady who was made to drudge at whist until she was wearied to death with the game. Not that she wanted talents for it, as 'Mr. Hoyle, when he had not given above forty lessons,' praised her as one of his best scholars. John

Carteret Pilkington, when describing his own life and the manners of the age in which it had passed, ridiculed the mania of the fine ladies of the day for 'cards, cards, cards,' and announced his intention of gratifying them by a 'paraphrase upon Hoyle . . . which, neatly bound in Turkey, a lady may read at church instead of her Prayer-book.'

Southey, in his 'Letters from England, by Espriella,' dwells on the popularity of Hoyle's treatise: 'Few books in the language or in any language have been so frequently printed, still fewer so intently studied.' Southey's persistent depreciator, Byron, penned the line:

'Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle.'

But this, as has been pointed out, does the modern writer an injustice, for Hoyle was more than the chronicler—he was practically the inventor of the game. To him, in a metaphorical sense, might be applied the words used of the Roman Emperor, 'He found it brick, and left it marble.'

The unkindest cut of all, and the sneer was not worthy of him, came from Matthews, or Mathews, of Bath. He mocked at the skill of his predecessor in the words: 'Hoyle himself, so far from being able to teach the game, was not fit to sit down even with the third-rate players of the present day.'

For some time after Hoyle's death there were few writers who ventured to compete with his works on the game of whist. Most of them endeavoured to

screen themselves under the shadow of his name. Of the small band of independent writers, Payne won the chief success. Another contributor to the literature of whist, though he only printed for the use of his friends, was Percival Haslam, whose little volume was entitled, 'A Few Hints to Whist-players.' He was the only son of a Captain in the army, and was himself a Captain in the 69th Regiment; but among his inheritances was that of gout, and as he was incapacitated by bodily infirmity from active service, he became the Adjutant to the Worcestershire Regiment of Militia. Whenever his duties allowed of his absence, Haslam repaired to Bath to seek relief through the healing virtues of its waters; and as he excelled in whist, although he never played for any considerable stake, he was 'frequently referred to in case of any difference of opinion, or new question that arose in that fashionable game.' The frequency of these demands tempted him to print, and his generous disposition prompted him to give the profits to a private charity. He died at Pershore, Worcestershire, on November 24, 1800, aged forty-five (*Gentleman's Magazine*, 1800, p. 1216).

The first two volumes of the *Sporting Magazine* (1793) contained 'Rules for Playing the Game of Whist,' which ran through several numbers, and were worthy of a temporary existence. But the third great work on whist was that of T. Mathews, or Matthews, of Bath. The first edition of his

treatise appeared without his name, and it was entitled, 'Advice to the Young Whist-player, containing most of the maxims of the old school, with the author's observations on those he thinks erroneous: with several new ones, exemplified by apposite cases; and a method of acquiring a knowledge of the principles on which they are grounded, pointed out to the inexperienced whist-player. By an Amateur. Bath: Printed by W. Meyler . . . 1804.' No copy of this volume is in the British Museum, and I am indebted for my inspection of it to the kindness of Mr. Emanuel Green, F.S.A., a life-long student of the bibliography of the illustrious writers who lived and published at Bath. Its contents included an address to the reader, one hundred 'Directions and Maxims for Beginners,' four pages on leads and the laws of whist; and they set out a system of play differing in some material respects from that in use during the eighteenth century. The dates of the second and third editions are unknown to me, but the fourth came out in 1810, and bears on its title-page the words, 'with additions,' and the name of the author as 'Thomas Matthews, Esq.' The ninth edition, which is the earliest entered under his name in the catalogue of the British Museum, was 'printed at the *Bath Herald* Office, by Meyler and Son, 1816,' and contains three pages of 'Observations on Short Whist'—a 'new game which had come into fashion' since the publication of the first edition. The eleventh

issue is dated 1818, and possesses an additional postscript of two pages. The thirteenth issue came out in 1822, with the same postscript, which is now stated to have been appended to the eighth edition, the sixteenth in 1825, and the eighteenth in 1828, and all of them purport to be 'by T. Mathews, Esq.' Nothing is known about him beyond the tradition that he was 'the finest player of his day'; but the merits of the volume have always been recognised, and it was reprinted and commented on by R. A. Proctor in the tenth volume of his magazine called *Knowledge*.

Mathews was a strong player and a terse writer. He has sometimes been called the founder of the new school; but his views are as often opposed to as in agreement with those of the present age. He laid down the principles that 'the best leads are from sequences,' and that without sequences you should 'lead from your most numerous suit, if strong in trumps.' 'Finesses are generally right in trumps or (if strong in them) in other suits, otherwise they are not to be risked but with caution.' But he seemed to censure 'the players of the *old school*, who never lead from a single card without six trumps'; and he confessed that, 'with three or four small trumps, I should prefer leading from a single card to a long weak suit.' Mathews anticipated the rule of the chief players in this generation by laying down the principle that, 'if the strength of trumps is with the adversaries,' the play of your partner

should be 'to keep guard on their suits, and throw away from his own'; and his book embodied the sound dictum, now universally adopted 'with three cards, return the highest, with four the lowest, of your partner's lead.'

The tenth edition of 'Easy Rules of Whist, with Maxims and the Laws of the Game,' was dated in 1815. It purported on the title-page to be the composition of 'Lieut.-General Scott,' and it was illustrated with a burlesque portrait of the General. But that great player was innocent of any share in its composition, and it had no pretensions to merit or originality.

Lamb's friend, Admiral James Burney, brought out in 1821 'An Essay by Way of Lecture on the Game of Whist,' in which the opinions of Mathews are often the subject of criticism, not always favourable. He died suddenly in November of that year, and the title of the second edition, which appeared in 1823, was altered to 'A Treatise on the Game of Whist.' When Francis Paget Watson introduced to the world in 1842 his volume on 'Short Whist,' he added to his own essay the third edition, with additions and corrections, of Burney's book, altering its title to that of 'Long Whist, with Instructions for Young Players.' A passage in the treatise of Watson contains a detail of forgotten history. He says, 'You cannot demand the sight of the last trick at *short whist*. The *longs* sanctioned it, and continue to do so, but it is a mockery upon the

game, which implies the greatest attention as it proceeds, and the sooner it is altogether got rid of the better.' When the practice of seeing the last trick crept into the game of short whist is unknown to me, but the sooner the permission to see it is withdrawn, the better it will be for the game. Burney has been described as 'personally a very skilful player, both of whist and chess,' and his book is said to be written in 'a chit-chat, gentlemanly style.'

A very popular work appeared for the first time in 1835. Its title was 'Short Whist: its Rise, Progress, and Laws, together with Maxims for Beginners, and Observations to make anyone a Whist-player, by Major A * * * *,' and it was intended, no doubt, to convey to the unwary the idea that its author was Major Aubrey. It was written by Charles Barwell Coles, author of 'The Discarded Son, a Tale, and other Rhymes, 1823,' and a poem in praise of 'Tea,' 1865. From the heading of the poem, on page 46, it would seem that he was educated at 'Winchester School,' and he was described as a man 'whoever he be who plays a good game of whist, and, breaking out of the trammels of pedantry, has given us a pocket-volume of instruction and amusement.' A second edition was called for in 'two short months,' another was published in 1836, and successive issues came out almost annually during many years, with the prefix of 'Precepts for Tyros, by Mrs. B * * * * * [Battle].'

The sixteenth edition (1865) was 'newly edited and completely revised,' and there was added to it 'an essay on the theory of the modern scientific game, by Professor P.' [Pole], which formed the nucleus of his subsequent volume. The illustrations which appeared in the 1835 edition of Major A., and depicted the game of whist as played in 1715 and 1815, have already been described; this issue was adorned with an illustration of four players in a railway carriage, and the print was labelled '1865, Express and Expeditious.' This work of Major A. did little for the development of the game; it was the older work of Mathews altered so as to suit the game of short whist.

A little volume of 'The Whist-player: the Laws and Practice of Short Whist explained and illustrated, by Lieut.-Colonel B * * * *, 1856,' second edition 1858, was dedicated to the Army and Navy Club. The initials and asterisks suggested that it was written by Colonel Blyth, but it is said to have been the work of Henry Charles Bunbury. 'An Epitome of the Game of Whist,' by E. M. Arnaud, in which he aimed at 'propriety and novelty of arrangement, clearness of diction, brevity and completeness,' was published at Edinburgh in 1829, but I can obtain no information as to his history, and an anonymous volume of 'Whist: its History and Practice, by an Amateur,' which was given to the world in 1843, proved of sufficient interest to require a second edition in the succeeding year. It

was well written, and its interest was heightened by numerous and humorous illustrations by Kenny Meadows, engraved by Orrin Smith and W. Linton. The historical portion of its contents was freely borrowed by some succeeding writers.

'The finest whist-player, beyond any comparison, the world has ever seen'—such are the words of Clay, and such was the opinion of every whist-player of that age—was M. Guillaume le Breton Deschapelles, a man with immense capacity for comprehending all games. His father was Gentleman of the Bed-chamber to Louis XVI., his elder brother filled the same position in the Court of Charles X. Deschapelles was of different views, and late in life, when he had developed into ardent republicanism, he was supposed to have been mixed up in some of the attempts at revolution which broke out in the earlier days of the reign of Louis Philippe. His papers were seized, and it was proved that he had drawn up a list of persons to be disposed of. Among them was an elderly acquaintance so described: 'Vatry (Alphie) to be guillotined. Reason—citoyen inutile.' Now, Vatry was a bad whist-player.

Deschapelles was the leading player of trictrac in France, when it was more played there than in any other country in Europe. Though he had but one hand, as he lost his right hand to the wrist in an affray against the Prussians, he was a good, practical billiard-player, and the best judge of the

game in France. His manual dexterity was remarkable, and it was very interesting to watch him, with his one hand, and that the left, collect the cards, sort them, play them, and gather them in tricks. He soon advanced to the front rank for Polish draughts, and he was for many years without a rival in the list of chess-players. It was reported that he had won no less than 30,000 francs at chess from that inveterate gambler, Blucher, a victory which proved some small compensation for the loss of a hand through the enemies of his country, the Prussians. In whist he was possessed of transcendent skill, and he was justly ranked throughout Great Britain, France and Germany as the first living whist-player. A match at whist between Lord Granville and Deschapelles was once arranged for 200,000 francs, but it was stopped through fear of Downing Street; the money for the French player was found in shares (George Walker's 'Chess and Chess-players').

During the intervals of twenty years Deschapelles worked at his manuscripts on whist. The first part appeared in 1839, with the brief title of the 'Traité du Whiste,' and related to the laws of the game. Much had been expected, but the hopes of the world were disappointed. It was cleverly written, but with a superfluity of expression. It was translated into English in the same year, and a very clever review of it—which I have seen attributed to a Mr. B. E. B. Pote—was inserted in the *Foreign Quarterly*

Review (xxiv., p. 335 *et seq.*). Some reminiscences of Deschapelles were confided by Mr. John Rheinart, a native of Lorraine, who had played with him in Paris, to the *Milwaukee Monthly* on 'Whist.' This wonderful master of the game died at Paris late in 1847.

A volume by Cœlebs, on 'The Laws and Practice of Whist,' demands notice as the first essay which contained an account of the call for trumps, or the 'Blue Peter' as it was then designated. The first edition came out in 1851, the second in 1856, the third in 1858, and it reached a sixth edition. Its author was Edward Augustus Carlyon, a Cornishman from Tregrehan, near St. Austell, who migrated to New Zealand. He was born in 1823, called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1850, and died at Gwavas, Napier, New Zealand, December 4, 1874. The second edition contained the laws, which had been 'specially revised in conformity with the rules of the Portland Club.' The volume possessed numerous merits, but it did not meet with a considerable sale.

The four men whose instruction in whist has been of the greatest benefit to the players of this age are Dr. William Pole, F.R.S., James Clay, M.P., Major-General Drayson, and 'Cavendish,' the sobriquet of Henry Jones; and the treatises of the first and the last of these experts have been received with especial favour. The first draught of Dr. Pole's 'Essay on the Theory of the Modern Scientific Game' appeared in 1865, as an appendix to the sixteenth edition of

Major A., and its authorship was only indicated by the title of Professor P. A few copies were also issued, with a title-page of their own, for private circulation among his friends, but the pagination used in the original edition was, of course, preserved in this private issue.

An abundant popularity has attended its course from the outset. It went through two editions as an appendix to the work of another, and at least fifteen editions of it have been required since it came out as a separate work in 1870. An enormous sale welcomed its appearance in America, and its author is able to bless himself on the possession of a copy bought in the Rocky Mountains for a few cents.

Dr. Pole set about the composition of this work with the intention of tracing the whole game to one principle, that of the combination of the hands of the two players. The nearest approach to this principle which he had found in any work was in the French volume of 'Génie du Whist, méconnu jusqu'à présent, par le Général B. de Vautré. Paris, 4e édition, 1847,' no copy of which is to be found in our national library at the British Museum.

The fifth edition of Pole's treatise was published in an enlarged form in 1873, and in this an attempt was made to illustrate in greater detail the style of play which should be adopted when an expert was linked to a bad partner. In very few card-rooms is it possible often to make up a table without the presence in the company of at least one player who

can only be stigmatized a 'duffer'; and the result of any effort to fuse the two hands into an effective weapon to counteract the machinations of their opponents requires the most careful consideration of the means by which the cards of the inefficient executant can be used to the best advantage. The advantage of combination in whist is now impressed upon every student of its niceties. The practice of playing for your own hand alone was condemned by Clay 'as the worst fault which I know in a bad player.' The fifteenth edition of Dr. Pole's treatise was published in 1885.

This admirable essay, if it stood alone as his only contribution to the science, would entitle its author to the warmest thanks of every lover of the game; but Dr. Pole may justly plume himself on the composition of another volume of equal value. This is 'The Philosophy of Whist' (1883), in which he aimed at showing that the game which he loved was 'a compact and consistent logical system, of a highly intellectual and philosophical character.' The second part of this volume consisted of the philosophy of whist probabilities, a world of speculation which has always opened up a delightful vista to his gaze. It abounds in figures, and the legitimate deductions which could be drawn from them. Many of the data on which it is based were kept by Mr. Spencer Perceval, of the Athenæum Club, during many years with great care and detail. The second edition was issued, and absorbed by a greedy world, in 1884; the

fourth, revised and augmented, is dated in 1886, and the sixth in 1892.

Some simple rhymes, drawn up by Dr. Pole to contain the main principles of his works, have been sold far and wide. The substance of these, called 'Rhyming Rules, Mnemonic Maxims, and Pocket Precepts for Modern Whist,' was first published in prose in March, 1864, on a card labelled 'Pocket Precepts.' When turned into rhyme the verses appeared in 'The Theory of the Modern Game,' and were sold separately in 1865, on a card of two pages, at the modest price of twopence. 'The Philosophical Whist Rhymes,' extracted from Dr. Pole's other volume, were sold in the same form in 1886.

The article on 'Whist' in the new edition of Bohn's 'Handbook of Games' was also the composition of Dr. Pole, and it was struck off separately in 1889. An important feature in it was the reproduction of the maxims of the three great writers on whist who flourished in the Georgian era—Hoyle, Payne, and Mathews. An article which the Doctor contributed to the *Fortnightly Review* in April, 1879, on 'Conventions at Whist,' merits notice. In it he argued against the fairness of the call for trumps, and seems to doubt the propriety of some other modern developments of the game. But he has long since, I believe, become a convert to the lawfulness, if not to the expediency, of the call.

Mr. James Clay, whose name has often met the reader's eye in these pages, was the author of the

treatise on whist 'by J. C.,' which was appended in 1864 to Mr. Baldwin's issue of the laws of the game. It was welcomed with delight by every English enthusiast in whist, and was almost immediately reprinted in New York. When the second edition came out, about 1870, Mr. Clay's name was given on the title-page as the author, and several later editions since that date have attested its popularity. The 'new and improved edition' of 1881 is a reprint, without any alteration, of the book as it was originally written; but Mr. Clay's sons contributed a short preface, which set out that their father had given his adhesion to the lead of the penultimate from suits of five cards or more—a lead since modified into that of the fourth-best card from suits so composed—and to the discard from the strongest suit instead of the weakest, when strength in trumps is shown to be with the adversaries. The simplicity of the style in which this book was written, and the practical nature of its suggestions, caused its instant acceptance in whist circles as the leading authority on the game. Many of the younger players learnt its precepts by heart, with the result that some of them sacrificed their own individuality of opinion, and lent too slavish an obedience to its instructions.

Another treatise, the value of which can scarcely be over-estimated, is 'The Art of Practical Whist' (1879), by the present Major-General Drayson, late of the Royal Artillery, and now a resident at

Southsea. In this he urged the propriety, long before the principle received general attention or public support, of leading the fourth-best card from suits of five or more. The fourth edition of his work is dated 1886, and the chief addition to the previous issues consisted of his suggestions for the simplification of the discard. In the appendix to it Major-General Drayson described with considerable humour twenty-six types of whist-players, all of them bad. The chief feature of the fifth edition (1886) concerns the 'American' leads. Their author expresses himself with much severity, but not in excess of the player's deserts, on the conduct of the player who, when weak in trumps, declines to 'force' his partner, although he has not called for trumps, or led them when he has won a previous trick.

A very full 'Cyclopædia of Cards and Table Games' came out in 1891, under the editorial care of Professor Hoffmann, a pseudonym for Angelo John Lewis. The article on whist (pp. 259-311) was contributed by Major-General Drayson, and contained an admirable summary of the rules and principles of the game.

The first edition of 'Cavendish's' work was a modest volume of eighty pages, and only 250 copies were printed. Of the eighteenth impression in 1889, no less than 5,000 copies were struck off. The full title of the first issue was: 'The Principles of Whist stated and explained, and its Practice illustrated in an Original System by Means of

Hands played completely through. By Cavendish. London: Bancks Brothers . . . 20, Piccadilly,' *n.d.* [1862], 8vo. His object was to give the reasons upon which the principles of sound whist were based, and to bring them home to the student by illustrative examples. Its sale has been little short of that accorded to the tract of Hoyle. The fifth edition, called, as all its successors have been, by the fuller title of 'The Laws and Principles of Whist,' was ushered into the world in the following year (1863), and the additional matter which it included comprised a code of laws, while the text was carefully revised, and the chapter on trumps was recast. When the eighth issue appeared in 1868, the text had again been revised, and many of the author's conclusions had been recast in a different form, while some cases and decisions approved by 'J. C.' had been added. The ninth edition (1868) was, with especial appropriateness, dedicated to Mr. Clay.

Six years later the tenth edition came into life, and was adorned by a frontispiece (since familiar in successive reissues to all whist-players) of several players and onlookers around a card-table. It was taken from Cotton's 'Compleat Gamester,' and in the original compilation was used as an illustration to 'Ruff and Honours.' This edition formed another landmark in the history of 'Cavendish,' for it contained many additions, such as a brief historical sketch of the game, a fuller statement of the discard, a number of fresh hands and appendices on the leads

from more than four cards, and on trumps. A few editions came out in subsequent years without the introduction of any fresh matter; but with the sixteenth impression of 1886 there was incorporated an appendix which explained the American leads, and a second chapter on the plain-suit echo. Its successor, which was dated in 1888, was unaltered; but to the eighteenth issue (1889) was added a third appendix of leads from ace, king, and king, queen suits. A considerable change was effected in the twentieth impression, for in it the original lead of fourth-best was included as a substantive part of the game, and the third appendix was abolished, as its recommendations were incorporated with the analysis of leads. For several years (1864-70) some small pocket hand-books, limited in size to a few pages, and priced at the moderate sum of sixpence, were issued by 'Cavendish' as the summary of its teaching. They were sold very largely, but have long since been discontinued.

The views which 'Cavendish' condensed in an appendix to the sixteenth edition of 'The Laws and Principles of Whist' were expanded by him in elaborate detail in a volume called 'Whist Developments: American Leads and the Plain-Suit Echo' (1885), and dedicated to Nicholas Browse Trist, a great whist-expert in America. A novelty in this work was the explanation of the system of unblocking, which has since then been the subject of close and patient investigation in the card-circles of

Europe and America. When the fourth edition of this treatise came out in 1891, its author was justified, as he thought, in asserting that the value of these leads had been acknowledged by the 'great majority of thoughtful players.' Some of his critics might consider that the emphatic character of this statement was somewhat weakened by his confession that the adoption of these principles rendered it necessary (when the adversaries had shown trump-strength) for the supporters of such leads to resort to the system of playing false cards.

A third work by 'Cavendish,' with the title of 'Card Essays: Clay's Decisions and Card-Table Talk,' was published in 1879, and dedicated to Edward Tavener Foster, an admirable card-player, at his best with a 'bad' partner; but, unlike his other ventures in the world of cards, a second edition has not yet been called for. To everyone interested in the 'gossip' of card-life during the twenty years which preceded that date its pages will prove a mine of attraction. It is now a scarce volume. Two years ago (1892) he drew up a small pamphlet of 'Musical Whist with Living Cards,' which illustrated some of the most famous hands in card-history during the past century. The hands were performed by the pupils of the Masonic Female Orphan School of Ireland on its centenary celebration.

In 1889 the same writer, in conjunction with 'B. W. D.,' issued a volume with the striking title

of 'Whist, with and without Perception, illustrated by Means of End-hands from Actual Play'; and so far back as 1863 there appeared a volume of 'Whist Studies; being Hands of Whist played through according to the System of Cavendish, and in Illustration of the Principles laid down in that Work.' Its authors disguised themselves under the initials of 'A. C.' and 'B. D.,' and the preface was signed, 'A. C., Kurnool, India.'

The investigations of 'Cavendish,' which have been pursued by him during many years with a patience and thoroughness without rival in the history of whist, entitle him to the warmest thanks from every admirer of the game. His name will long live in the history of English amusements, and will never be mentioned without the warmest expression of approbation.

Richard Anthony Proctor was an enthusiastic whist-player, whose talents at the game were not inconsiderable, though they might have been enhanced had he joined in one of the established clubs of London in playing with experts worthy of association with him. He was 'happy in the companionship of wife and children, and of a chosen friend or two with whom to wind up the day over a rubber.' Few men have passed a more active life, but amid all his other occupations he found time for 'chess and whist, both of which games he played extremely well.' His birth took place at Chelsea in 1834; he died at Willard Parker Hospital, New

York, September 12, 1888, from fever contracted in Florida. From the start his paper called *Knowledge* contained a column on whist, and among his contributors was Frederick Hyman Lewis, who, like the editor, excelled in both whist and chess. The treatise of Mathews was reprinted, and its conclusions were criticised, in the pages of the tenth volume; and in it there appeared at intervals the substance of Proctor's treatises on the game. These comprised: (1) 'Knowledge' Library: 'How to Play Whist,' by 'Five of Clubs' (Richard A. Proctor: London, 1885), in which he contended that, with the two exceptions of the modern system of signalling and the depreciation of leads from singletons, there was very little difference between the game of Hoyle and Mathews and that of to-day; (2) 'Home Whist: an Easy Guide to Correct Play,' by 'Five of Clubs' (Richard A. Proctor, 1886); (3) 'Other Suns than Ours, a Series of Essays, with Two Articles on Whist' by R. A. Proctor, 1887. The two chapters were No. xxiii., 'The Language of Whist, with Special Reference to American Leads'; No. xxiv., 'But is Whist-signalling Honest?' Their author was for some time a supporter of the latest developments and of the ideas of the Americans; but he gradually altered his position, until he rejected them altogether with fierce expressions of scorn as 'fads.'

F. H. Lewis was the third son of James Graham Lewis, of Ely Place, London, solicitor. He was

educated at University College School, London, from 1848 to 1851; was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple on January 26, 1856, and went the South-Eastern Circuit. On the foundation at his old school of the Paulatim Club, he became an original member, and assisted materially in the formation of its library—a collection of books written, edited, or illustrated by old boys, or of volumes relating to them and to the school. He presented to it a complete set of the articles on whist and double-dummy problems which he communicated to the 'Westminster Papers' from 1868 to 1879, as well as his own annotated copy of Proctor's 'How to Play Whist.' On his death he left sufficient money to the school to continue the prizes for Latin prose, German composition, and arithmetic which he had established in his lifetime. Lewis was a magnificent double-dummy player and an excellent chess-player, 'and succeeded in drawing a game with the incomparable Morphy.' His portrait is in the 'Westminster Papers' for June 1, 1877.

George Frederick Pardon, who died at the Fleur de Lis Hotel, Canterbury, on August 5, 1884, wrote several works on whist, most of which appeared under the disguise of 'Captain Crawley.' All his life long he was an industrious bookseller's hack, working underground, and rarely appearing before the public under his own name. His friend, E. L. Blanchard, in that marvellous record of literary work drawn from great resources of knowledge, and

effected with considerable ability, but all executed for the larger half of his career at starvation prices, which he left behind him in manuscript, chronicled that he knew Pardon well, and gives us a glimpse of his labours. 'He was with my old publisher Willoughby, in Smithfield, engaged on the *People* and *Howitt's Journal*, and the reader of my (Phelps') edition of Shakespeare.' Pardon's whist ventures were: (1) 'Whist: Its Theory and Practice. By Captain Crawley,' *n.d.* (1859). The tenth edition, revised, was published about 1876, and was gracefully dedicated 'To my old friends and partners in many hard-fought games, Thomas Ridgway and Thomas Clementson.' (2) 'A Handbook of Whist, on the Text of Hoyle' (1861). (3) 'The Card-player's Manual, comprising Whist, Loo, etc. By Captain Crawley,' *n.d.* (1876).

Captain J. W. Carleton, of the 2nd Dragoon Guards, whose *nom de guerre* in literature was 'Craven,' compiled the manual of whist in Bohn's 'Handbook of Games.' It was divided into four sections: 'Whist *à la* Mathews,' 'Whist *à la* Hoyle,' 'Whist *à la* Deschapelles,' the last of them being 'Whist *à la* Carleton.' This was at the best but a cumbrous form of compilation.

A host of works by other writers may now be briefly summarized. Mr. Abraham Hayward, who devoted to whist many of the spare hours of his life, contributed to the *Quarterly Review* for January, 1871, an article of great interest on 'Modern

Whist.' From this article was extracted a leaflet of twelve rules in two pages, called 'Short Rules for Modern Whist,' which was published by Trübner and Co., about 1878, for the modest price of sixpence. Substantially the same rules, with the addition of the laws of the game, were published by W. H. Willis and Co. The little volume of 'Whist: Which Card to Lead; by Cam,' launched into the world by Longmans in 1865, passed into a second edition in the same year, into a third in 1866, and into a fourth in 1868. It was the composition of Waller Augustus Lewis, M.D., a 'really fine player,' and the chief medical officer of the Post-Office, who died at Whitby on September 8, 1882. His wife, Hester Margaret, youngest daughter of the late General Sir William Pringle, K.C.B., died on June 12, 1871.

'The Correct Card, and How to Play at Whist,' was the composition of Captain Arthur Campbell-Walker, of her Majesty's body-guard, and formerly of the 79th Cameron Highlanders. Its year of publication was 1876, and by 1880 it had reached a sale of 9,000 copies, when the author was able to boast that it was on sale at Yokohama, and that a whist club at Monroe, Michigan, U.S., was called 'the Campbell-Walker Whist Club' in his honour. He died at 29, Palmeira Square, Brighton, on April 2, 1887, and on April 6 was buried at Berkhampsted by the side of his wife, Katharine Maria, who died on December 18, 1874.

Another compilation, 'The Whist-player's Guide,'

(1881) was compiled by Hill Faulconer Morgan, late Captain of the 28th Regiment, and dated from the Wanderers' Club, Pall Mall. It was a useful little treatise, dealing with the subject by way of question and answer. Thomas Brittain, a professional accountant at Manchester, who was absorbed in natural science and possessed of great skill in the use of the microscope, did not disdain to spend in whist the hours which he could spare from business and science. His little treatise 'Whist: How to Play and How to Win; Being the Result of Sixty Years' Play,' was published by Heywood of Manchester in 1882, but no copy has up to this date appeared in the library of the British Museum. Mr. Brittain died at Manchester on January 23, 1884, aged seventy-eight, so that his studies at whist began while he was yet in his teens. Mr. Clement Davies, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, drew up in 1886, and published at the request of the members of the Union Club, Birmingham, a work on 'Modern Whist, together with the Laws,' and Mr. Charles Thomas Buckland composed a volume of 'Whist for Beginners.' A very good 'Handbook of Whist, and Ready Reference Manual of the Modern Scientific Game,' was issued at New York and London in 1885, but its author's name is disguised under the pseudonym of 'Major Tenace.' A series of text-books, ranging from 'Easy Whist' in 1884, to 'Improved Whist' in 1890, have been favourably received by the younger lovers of the game. Their authorship

is concealed under the title of 'Aquarius,' but he is understood to be Mr. Lowes d'Aguilar Jackson, a civil engineer. Sir William Cusack-Smith wrote in 1891 a very useful 'Encyclopædia of the Game of Whist. Prefaced with Words of Advice to Young Players.' It would be unpardonable not to refer to the information on the game which was contained in the volumes of 'Westminster Papers,' under the editorship of Mr. Charles Mossop. This periodical was started in April, 1868, as the 'Westminster Chess Club Papers,' but the first number contained a whist hand and a page of whist-jottings, and after the first volume the title was altered to that of the 'Westminster Papers.' It lasted for eleven years, and contributions came to it from India, Siberia, Jamaica, Pernambuco, with a host of communications from the United States.

The little volume of 'Whist or Bumblepuppy? by Pembridge,' has delighted many thousands of readers, and is the indispensable accompaniment of every well-appointed card-room. It passed through two editions in 1880, the first of which was printed by the 'Universal Provider,' William Whiteley, of Westbourne Grove. Its author four years later brought out another volume on 'The Decline and Fall of Whist, an Old-fashioned View of New-fangled Play.' This is a lengthened argument against the modern practices which have found in this country their most strenuous advocate in the person of 'Cavendish.' The author of these works

is John Petch Hewby, a medical man at North Kensington. The same practices have been fiercely denounced by 'Mogul' [Mr. Matthias Boyce] in the *Cornhill Magazine* for February, 1886, and by R. A. Proctor in *Longman's Magazine* for April, 1886.

The passion for whist throughout the provinces of America has produced, in that continent, as might naturally be expected, a variety of treatises on the game. Those by G. W. P. are the most numerous. He was undoubtedly the most voluminous American author on the game. The first book by him — his name was George W. Pettes — which reached the shores of England was 'American or Standard Whist,' the second edition of which was published at Boston in 1881. The game of whist differs in details in most countries. In America honours are not reckoned, and seven points make the game. This volume was followed by several others, such as 'Whist Universal' (1887), 'American Whist Illustrated' (1890), a combination of the two preceding works, and 'Whist in Diagrams' (1891), a supplement to the preceding treatise. Mr. Pettes died on March 18, 1892.

The second American writer on whist is certainly Mr. William B. Dick, who writes under the pseudonym of 'Trumps.' The thirteenth edition of his 'American Hoyle' came out at New York in 1880. It was first given to the world about 1863. The success of this disguise no doubt led a succeeding

writer to adopt the diminutive of 'A Trump Junior,' when he published at New York his volume on the 'Laws and Regulations of Short Whist, adopted by the Washington Club of Paris . . . with Maxims and Advice for Beginners. 1880.' This work is remarkable for a long preface on the point whether a player can, with freedom from all penalty, show his entire hand to the other three persons at the table, provided that he retains them in his hand in one group, and does not detach any card from the rest.

The 'Practical Guide to Whist,' by Fisher Ames of Boston, is a valuable condensation of the Cavendish-Trist system of play. He is a native of Lowell, Massachusetts. There was published at Salem, in 1890, a book on 'Concise Whist: the Principles of Modern Whist as modified by American Leads, presented in a Simple and Practical Form.' The preface of two sentences, signed 'C. S. S.,' shows that it was the condensed wisdom of more than one student of the game. Mr. R. F. Foster is a native of Edinburgh, but he settled in, and learnt his play at, New York. When the firm of Mudie and Sons, of 15, Coventry Street, passed through the press in 1890 his 'Whist Manual,' there appeared on the title-page the notification that it was written 'by R. F. Foster, New York.'

Mr. S. Seymour, a civil engineer, published at Quebec, in 1878, a revised edition of the work, which he called 'A Compend of Short Whist,' a

title which grates somewhat harshly on an English ear. It was dedicated to the gentlemen of the Stadacona Club, with whom, during his residence in that city, he had spent many pleasant hours in the fascinating game of whist.

When Daines Barrington contributed his paper to the 'Archæologia' more than a century ago, he concluded his observations with the reflection that 'as games are subject to revolutions, whisk may perhaps be as much forgot in the next century, as Primero is at present.' Time has falsified this faltering prediction. May the succeeding century end its years with a like result!

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